

MAGIC

An Occult Primer

David Conway



The Complete
Do-It-Yourself Guide



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David Conway



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Pronaque cum spectent animalia cetera terram
Os homini sublime dedit, coelumque tueri
Jussit, et erectos ad sidere tollere voltus

Ovid, *Metamorphoses I*

All other creatures look down towards the earth,
but man was given a face so that he might turn
his eyes towards the stars and gaze upon the sky.

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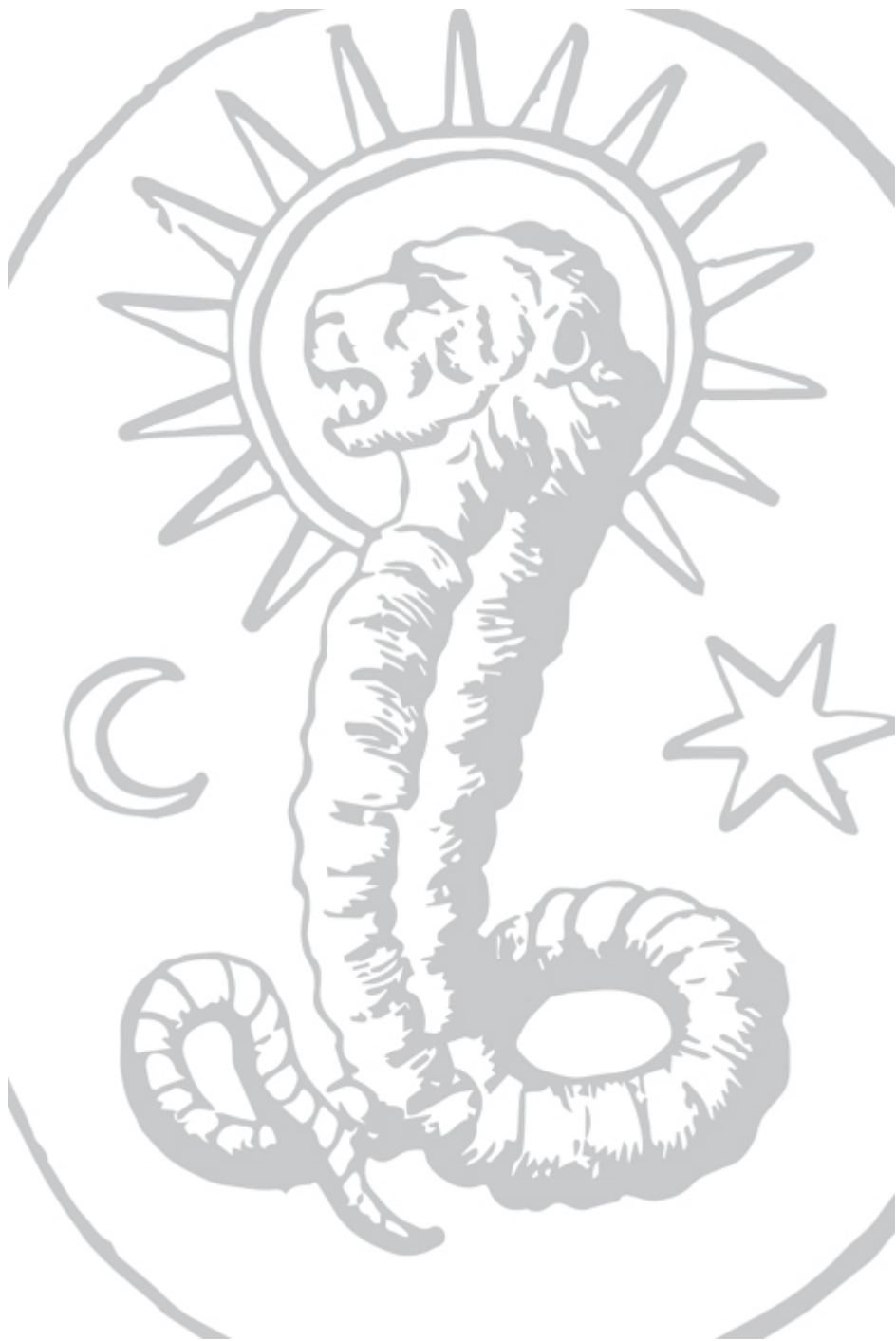
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Cover Illustration: Chnoubis is a the solar lion headed serpent of Egyptian Gnostics often found on gems and amulets for protection against disease and poisoning. Chnoubis is an aspect of the Gnostic Demiurge, Yaldabaoth associated with Abraxas. It is the perfect combination of the solar lion leading to enlightenment and serpent connecting back to the earth energies.



FOREWORD BY COLIN WILSON

This strikes me as one of the best books on magic that has been written in the twentieth century, and one of the best introductions to magic (an altogether rarer phenomenon), written in any century. I have only one minor criticism. The author is a genuine magician; consequently, he fails to grasp the extent to which the rest of us find the whole idea of magic frankly absurd. Let me see if I can make the proposition sound any less illogical.

In August 1888, a young man named Charles Johnston was sitting in the room of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. The founder of Theosophy. Madame Blavatsky was playing patience; her friend Colonel Olcott, on a visit to her, was writing a letter at a side table; Johnston was sitting nearby, carrying on a desultory conversation with both. Madame Blavatsky became impatient as the cards refused to ‘come out’; she frowned and drummed her fingers on the table top. Then, quite unconsciously, she raised her hand well above the table, continuing to drum with her fingers. The tapping sounds on the table continued. Realizing that Johnston was watching her with interest, she turned towards him and began to tap on the back of his hand—without rising from her seat. He was five or six feet away from her. Now amused by her game, she transferred the taps to the top of his head. Johnston writes: ‘I could both feel and hear them. It was something like taking sparks from the prime conductor of an electric machine; or, better still perhaps, it was like spurting quicksilver...’

Johnston goes on to say that this was ‘a quite undoubted miracle.’ It was, of course, nothing of the sort. It was a perfectly ordinary phenomenon which was observed hundreds—probably thousands—of times by psychic researchers. It is known as a ‘poltergeist effect.’ Madame Blavatsky was particularly good at it; when she first met her disciple Sinnet, he told her that he had tried spiritualism, but could not even get the spirits to rap on a table. ‘Raps are the easy to get’ said Madame Blavatsky, and made raps sound from all over the room. A vagabond named William Drury had made the same discovery 200 years earlier; he was arrested at the small town Ludgershall, in Wiltshire, in 1661; his drum was confiscated and he was sent to jail. Immediately afterwards, the house of the magistrate who had

sentenced him was disturbed by loud drumming noises, which went on every night, together with other strange phenomena. The case—known as ‘the phantom drummer of Tedworth’—is attested by dozens of witnesses. Drury admitted to a visitor that it was he who was somehow causing the disturbances and when he was transported out of the country, they ceased.

Perhaps the most amazing and convincing case is one that has been published since Mr. Conway first wrote this book. In the early 1970s, the Toronto Society for Psychical Research, under the direction of Dr. George Owen and his wife Iris, decided to try to create a ghost. A group of researchers invented the life story of a seventeenth century cavalier named Philip who had a tragic love affair with a gypsy girl and committed suicide. They then sat around and tried to persuade the imaginary ghost to rap on a table. For months, nothing happened although they tried hard. Then, one day when they had *stopped* trying, loud wraps began to sound from the table. The ‘spirit’ identified itself as Philip and told his life story in detail; it also made the table march around the room. Philip eventually became such a professional performer that he even made the table levitate in front of a television audience.

In short, there can be no reasonable room for doubt that ‘poltergeist effects’ originate in the human subconscious mind—more often than not in the minds of disturbed adolescents. Yet we do not have the slightest idea of *how* the mind can cause an object to fly through the air or make rapping noises all over the room. What energies are involved? How do they work? At the moment, no one has even managed to offer a convincing explanation.

Now I would submit that this is what is usually meant by ‘magic’. It is true that the legendary ‘great magicians’—from Merlin to Gandalf—could do far more spectacular things; Merlin is supposed to have transported the great trilithons of Stonehenge from Ireland by magic. (He didn’t—they were there 2000 years before King Arthur’s time.) But if you read any book about the history of men who were supposed to be able to perform magic, from Apollonius of Tyana to Aleister Crowley, you will discover that their feats were far less spectacular. Crowley once demonstrated his powers to an acquaintance in New York; he fell into step behind a respectable looking gentleman, imitating his walk exactly. Suddenly, Crowley allowed himself to crumple at the knees; the man in front of him also fell on the

pavement; he got up looking puzzled and frightened, wondering what had happened.

And now, I think, my own basic theory of magic should be emerging. 'Magical powers' originate in the unconscious mind. And the reason that we are naturally sceptical about their existence is that what you call 'you' and I call 'me' are our *conscious* egos. Disturbed adolescents can cause 'poltergeist effects' because their unconscious minds are far more highly charged than the average person's by tensions due to physical changes. (For some odd reason, menstruating women can sometimes produce the same effects—a fact that is recognized by most primitive tribes.) In most of us, the unconscious has adjusted itself to the routine of everyday life, and sees no good reason to make unusual efforts. So it yawns and relaxes. A man like Crowley deliberately kept his 'unconscious' supercharged by practicing strange magical rituals and by behaving in a way that would strike most of us as deplorable. (For example, he filed his teeth so as to be able to draw blood from his girlfriends, who were usually masochists.)

Now all this sounds incredible enough. But in the past two or three years, there has emerged at least one piece of scientific evidence whose value seems to me incalculable. I am speaking of the discoveries made by R. W. Sperry and others in the field of 'split brain research.' What they have discovered, basically, is that there are *two* people living inside our heads. The right and left sides of our brains have quite different functions—this has been known for more than a century. The left deals with language, with ideas, with analysis; the right with recognition, with intuition. In other words, to put it crudely, the left is a scientist and the right is an artist. But the two halves are joined by a knot of nerve fibre which keeps them in close contact, like the hot line between two neighbouring states. If this fibre is separated (as it sometimes is to cure epilepsy), the results can be rather odd. If the left eye is shown an apple, and the right eye is shown an orange, and the person is asked what he has just seen, he replies: 'An orange.' But if he is asked to *write* what he has seen with his left hand, he writes 'apple.' If asked what he has just written, he will reply: 'orange.' (It should be mentioned that, for some reason, the right hemisphere of the brain governs the left side of the body, and vice versa.) Moreover, if the right side of the brain is shown an obscene picture, the patient will blush; asked why he is blushing, he replies 'I don't know.' And he doesn't. In other words, the person who calls himself 'I' is actually

only the left side of the brain; sitting only a few centimeters away, there is another 'you', who exists as a completely independent person. The right hemisphere is silent; yet it is just as much an individual as the left.

This explains, at least, how it is possible for a person to cause poltergeist effects and yet be totally unaware that he is the cause. (This is so almost invariably—Dr. Owen warns psychical researchers against telling young people who are the focus of such disturbances that they are to blame; it can cause severe shock.) The left is genuinely ignorant of what the right is up to.

The inference would seem to be that the left side our brain is what Freud called the 'ego'; the right is, presumably, what he called the 'id', or the unconscious. Or, at least, is the gateway to the unconscious. For there are other mysterious 'lower regions' of the brain—the cerebellum, the limbic system, the 'reptile brain', a relic of our remote past in primeval seas. The psychologist Stan Gooch is convinced that it is the cerebellum—the so-called 'old brain'—that is responsible for 'paranormal experience.' We know almost nothing about the brain. Meanwhile, the experts—like Sperry, Robert Ornstein, Sir John Eccles—are not too happy when amateurs like me begin to evolve curious theories, pointing out that some new discovery tomorrow may change everything. I take their point but—forgive me—decline to stop speculating.

And in the present case, it is easy to see why. These discoveries could be the great breakthrough in the field of paranormal research. Moreover, they suggest all kinds of revolutionary experiments. For example, in the last century, when hypnosis had only recently been discovered, there were many experiments to try to determine whether it could endow people with paranormal powers. There is an immense amount of evidence that it could—certain hypnotised subjects were able to display 'travelling clairvoyance', and describe places that they had never visited. (All this can be found in the four volumes of E. J. Dingwall's classic *Abnormal Hypnotic Phenomena*.) But this new knowledge of the functions of left and right hemispheres suggests that when a person is hypnotised, it is only the left side of the brain that is put to sleep; the right remains as active as ever. (This, at any rate, is my own conviction.) And if, as we suspect, the right brain lies at the root of paranormal phenomena, then it might be possible to train it to make more deliberate use of its powers through hypnosis.

Another obvious possibility is to attempt to train people who have had the 'split brain' operation, which might be even more rewarding...

Any good book on psychical research will tell you that 'poltergeist effects' are not the only 'strange powers' at the command of certain human beings. There are, for example, many well-authenticated examples of genuine glimpses of the future. This taxes our credulity far more than poltergeist phenomena, because it seems to contradict the common sense recognition that the future has not yet happened. Then there is a vast amount of evidence for the phenomenon known as 'out of the body experience'—people at certain moments find themselves apparently hovering outside their own bodies. The majority of these are not remotely interested in 'occultism'; they are perfectly ordinary people who have had just one single abnormal experience. (It happened to the biologist Lyall Watson, for example, when his Landrover overturned in Africa; in his 'out of body' state he saw the position of one of the passengers, halfway through the roof. He recovered consciousness moments later and verified that this observation had been correct.) The evidence for telepathy and 'second sight' is also impressive.

Now all this is, I would argue, a form of what our ancestors called 'magic.' We do not think of such things as magic because the word conjures up Merlin and Dr. Faust and Gandalf. This is a mistake, and it explains the understandable and universal skepticism about magic. If, in fact, we can accept that 'paranormal phenomena' are somehow produced by the 'other self' inside the brain, then we have acknowledged that every one of us contains a magician.

At which point, I have to acknowledge that this is not all there is to it. Anyone who has been more than half convinced by my arguments so far may find the second part harder to swallow. I do myself, and I have to admit that I am by no means totally convinced about it.

Let me begin by speaking of a subject that most of us know at least a little about: astrology. Few people can resist surreptitiously reading their horoscope in the daily newspaper, even if they insist—quite truthfully—that they regard the whole thing as a joke.

I agree with the sceptics. Of course astrology is a joke. Of course it is preposterous to suppose that the position of the stars and planets could exert the slightest influence on the life of human beings... Having said which, I have to shamefacedly admit that, in many cases, it really seems to

work. I am willing to admit that it could all be coincidence; yet it does seem true that many people born under Cancer are home-lovers with an over-developed protective streak; that Geminis tend to be clever and changeable; that Capricorns are plodders; that Leos are show-offs; that Virgos are precise and tidy; that Pisces are romantics; that Aquarians are detached but kind; that Scorpios have powerful and often violent emotions... Moreover, people also display characteristics of their rising sign—the sign that was coming up over the horizon at the moment of their birth. This was investigated by two French statisticians, the Gauquelins, who convinced themselves that this was more than coincidence. They turned over their results to a thoroughly tough-minded psychologist named H. J. Eysenck, who was convinced that the whole thing was nonsense, and that it would only take him a few hours to prove it. Eysenck has ended up by publicly acknowledging that, for some totally unknown reason, people *are* influenced by their rising sign.

In short, it is one of the basic principles of traditional magic that, in some unknown way, there is a link between man and the heavens. ‘As above, so below’ said Thrice Great Hermes. It may be some purely mechanical link, as mechanical as the genes that determine the colour of our eyes. One student of astrology, the late Rodney Collin, suggest that when a person is born, something inside him responds like a light meter to the precise configuration of the planets (and, of course to their gravitational forces.) So each of us is stamped at the moment of our birth like a branded cow. My own theory, for what it is worth, is that the major influence on human beings is the earth itself, which exerts all kinds of strange forces on our minds and emotions. But the delicately balanced magnetic forces of the earth change from moment to moment, as the tides are influenced by the moon. If I am correct we are more closely connected to the earth than we realise.

Which brings me to the oddest part. It is only in recent centuries that we have learned about the relation of the heavens to the earth, of the way in which the moon influences the tides and sunspots influence the growth of plants and trees. Yet our ancestors of three thousand years ago had already worked out an elaborate science of man's relationship to the universe. If Professors Alexander Thom and Gerald Hawkins are correct, the earliest part of Stonehenge, constructed five thousand years ago, is an elaborate computer for working out eclipses of the sun and moon. We not only have

no idea how our Neolithic ancestors acquired such knowledge, but *why* they acquired it. My guess—and in an introduction like this I lack the space to justify it—is that they had a thorough but *instinctive* (i.e. right brain) knowledge of such matters; they knew about the relation between heaven and earth ‘in their bones.’

Now it is important to realise that ancient ‘magic’ is not merely a collection of absurd superstitions—although it inevitably contains plenty of these—but an elaborate knowledge system, as precise and complex as our tables of atomic weights. Like most people, I had always assumed that it was something of a joke, until I was asked to write a book on ‘the occult.’ What surprised me as I read about Babylonian and Assyrian and Egyptian and Greek and Roman and Celtic magic was that they were so incredibly similar. If magic was merely crude pre-scientific thinking, you would expect the magic of the Eskimos to differ as much from that of the Central Africans as their climate; and you would certainly expect to find no resemblance whatever between the magic of the Norsemen and the ancient Chinese. This is not so; not only are there dozens of similarities, there is an obvious basic *identity*. They were talking about the same thing. Jungians might explain this by saying that the human race possesses a collective unconscious—which could be stretched to mean that both Chinese and African alcoholics will see pink elephants, and that this proves nothing. Yet it seems to me more accurate to say that all primitive ‘shamans’ (or witch doctors) were trying to describe something they saw in the *outside* world—an underlying ‘order of nature.’ This, at any rate, is my own impression.

This notion that there is some kind of connection between the universe and man—the macrocosm and the microcosm—is the basic principle of all magic; it is called a ‘correspondence.’ And, according to the ancients there was not only a system of correspondences between man and the planets (the stars do not really count in astrology, being merely the equivalent of the figures around the edge of a clock), but between the planets and various animals, colours, scents, gods, and so on. And, perhaps most important, between the planets and the various sephira (or emanations—wishes made manifest) of the Kabbala. The system of Jewish mysticism known as the Kabbala is the basis of western magic, its atomic table of the elements, so to speak. It is such an incredible and fascinating study that I am tempted to devote a few paragraphs to it here; but Mr. Conway has

explained it all so well in the book that it would be pointless. Anyone who is curious about my own views can find them in my book *The Occult*.

I have to admit that when I first opened David Conway's book on magic—it was sent to me for review by its English publisher—I was inclined to feel dismissive. A history of magic would have been respectable enough, but a book that professes to teach students how to perform simple magic seemed altogether too much of a gimmick. But as soon as I began to read, I was impressed by a certain quality of the author's mind—a sense of genuineness. When I had finished the book, I realized that it *is* a good general introduction to the subject of magic, the kind of thing that would serve a student of anthropology who was writing a paper on the subject. And since the author believes that magic really works, it is only common sense that he should try to offer some basic rules and procedures.

Who is David Conway? The name is, in fact, a pseudonym. Soon after I reviewed the book, we had some correspondence, and he explained that his reason for using the alias was that he was working for the government, and his colleagues in the department might look at him a little oddly, if they knew he was a magician. Since then he has left government service and gone to live in Germany. And now, knowing a little more of him, I realise that it was not entirely because of his government job that he preferred to keep his identity a secret. For there is nothing of the phoney or exhibitionist about David Conway. He is not merely a magician, but a genuine mystic, an intensely private person who is absorbed in what Blake called 'the inner worlds' and their mystery.

This became clear to me when I asked him for some personal details. He is, to begin with, a Welshman—that is, a Celt. For some odd reason, the Celts are the most 'mystical' race on earth. They include, of course, the Irish, the Welsh, and the Scots, and certain tribes of Spain. "Second sight" is common among them. David Conway's experience of the occult began as a baby, when two strange old ladies used to come to his bedside and talk to him. They also tickled him, and his parents would rush in, wondering why he was shouting. When he told them about the old ladies they took it for granted that he was dreaming, although they were struck with the exactness of his descriptions of the women—he even knew their pet names (they told him to call them Auntie). Then one day, the local doctor called, and the five year old boy described the old ladies. After that, his parents moved him to another bedroom, and he saw no more of them. It was only

years later that his parents told him that the old ladies *had* once lived in the house—forty years earlier. One had died in the bedroom; the other had committed suicide there some months later.

David Conway's explanation of this curious episode is that the old ladies had somehow left 'memory traces' of their presence imprinted on the room, and the small boy's unconscious mind had picked up these traces when he was relaxed, on the point of sleep, and had 'translated' them into real people. The 'memory trace' theory of 'ghosts' is fairly well-known in psychic circles; it was first suggested by Sir Oliver Lodge around the turn of the century—and is to my mind highly plausible. But in this case, I do not feel that it fits. I get the feeling that Mr. Conway is leaning over backwards to try to sound logical when it might be better to acknowledge that this is one of those matters that, at the moment, we cannot even begin to explain.

In order to understand David Conway, it is necessary to accept that there are certain human beings who, from their earliest days, have a strong sense that the solid physical world is only half the story, and that hidden behind it there is a world of 'invisible' reality. William Blake was such a person; so was Emanuel Swedenborg; so was Randolph Steiner; so was George Russell, better known as the poet AE. All had what would be termed 'supernatural' experiences in childhood; yet all were far more interested in what they felt to be this perfectly natural world concealed behind the visible world of solid objects. It is also worth noting that Blake, Swedenborg, Steiner and Russell were all basically realists, hard-headed men with a definite scientific or practical bent. The same is true of David Conway, as the first chapter of this book shows.

Conway was brought up in a remote country district of Wales. Anyone who knows such areas—I live in a similar one myself—will also know that there are many aspects of the 'supernatural' that are taken for granted there; for example, there are 'wart charmers' who really *can* make warts disappear in a day or so by muttering a charm. There are dowsers who can not only locate underground water, but who can discover the sex of an unborn child by swinging a pendulum over the mother's stomach. When David Conway was four, he was taken to see a local farmer, a Mr. James of Plynlimon, who made up various herbal remedies that he dispensed throughout the district. The odd thing about these remedies is that they worked. Conway was so fascinated by it all that he learned all that Mr. James could teach him about herbal law (and has since written a book

about it). At the age of seven, he found an adult reader's ticket to the local library, which had a fairly good 'occult' section—no doubt consisting largely of works like Harry Price's *Most Haunted House in England*; young Conway hurled himself on it, and soon had a wide and comprehensive working knowledge of 'the occult.' But Mr. James remained his chief mentor, introducing him to astrology as well as herbalism, and to the simple basic principles of ordinary 'white magic.' Someone should persuade him to write a book about his apprenticeship with the Welsh farmer; from hints he has dropped, I suspect it would be as fascinating as Carlos Castaneda's accounts of Don Juan, as well as being rather more truthful.

Meeting Mr. James was the best piece of luck of Conway's early years, for he was able to absorb all of the basic principles of 'mysticism' (for that is what it amounts to), at an early age, before the 'shades of the prison house' began to close on the growing youth. For he admits that at University, he did his best to seem like all the other graduates, and forgot his magic. His few attempts to explore Spiritualism, theosophy and contemporary witchcraft soon ended in disillusionment—or boredom. He does not explain why, but I presume it was for the same reason that I felt repelled by my own contacts with Spiritualism as a child and teenager—my grandparents were Spiritualists; it seemed somehow too vague, too imprecise, too human—*all* too human. But his early magical training provided him with a solid foundation, and in his early twenties, David Conway decided that he would try to do what no one seemed to have attempted—to write about magic from the point of view of an objective observer *and* a believer. The result was the present volume, which seems to me to be wholly successful in achieving its aims.

And do I actually believe in magic? The question embarrasses me, because I dislike the word. It is a pity we cannot have done with it, and invent some other word, or phrase, that links the subject with psychical research and paranormal phenomena. Then I would not have the least hesitation in answering in the affirmative.

I believe that man has *two* 'wills'—one associated with left-brain consciousness, the other with the right. The left will can bring great precision to bear, but it lacks force. The right will, like an elephant, has a great force, but it lacks precision. Magical disciplines must be seen as an attempt to somehow teach the 'right will' (which some occultists prefer to

call 'the true will'), how to discipline its own forces. Like a snake in a basket, this consciousness responds to music (or symbols) rather than to ideas. I would draw the reader's attention particularly to [Chapter 4](#) of [Part One](#), where Mr. Conway describes the art of 'visualisation.' It underlines the important point that the only certain way of calling upon the forces of the right hemisphere is through the use of controlled imagination.

If anyone wishes to take this as an admission that the whole subject is moonshine, neither I nor Mr. Conway will be in the least bothered. This book is plainly not for them. Those of a more enquiring turn of mind may care to ponder why the word 'moonshine' is so often used as a synonym for imagination. The answer will provide them with a good introductory insight into the world of the paranormal.

Colin Wilson
Cornwall
England
June, 1978

PREFACE TO THIS EDITION

Many years have passed since this book was written, all of it committed to paper by hand. (Personal computers hadn't been invented and I could not afford a typewriter.) I'd just turned twenty. The final paragraph was completed one afternoon on a Spanish beach, late in the season and with few other people about. No sooner had I put down my pen than a gust of wind blew away the pages resting on my knee. I chased after them, pursued by wild dogs and plaintive cries of '*Helados*' from an ice cream vendor desperate for custom. Somehow I managed to retrieve each and every page. Who said magic doesn't work?

With a confidence peculiar to young people, at least until experience contrives to undermine it, I didn't get too excited when the draft was accepted by the first publisher I showed it to. What did surprise me was the impact the book would have on reviewers and readers alike. That it remained in print for thirty years, not just in Great Britain but elsewhere also, became a source of pride but never, I hope, did it go to my head.

On the contrary as time passed I began to fear that my growing experience of magic and, indeed, of life itself, might have rendered much of the book, if not obsolete, then not what my older self might have chosen to say. As a result from the late nineteen-eighties, I seldom looked again at what I'd written in younger and more carefree days. Only now, with a new edition in prospect, have I forced myself to read the book all over again.

I feared the worst. Happily, what I found was better than I dared expect. At times it felt as if I were reading it for the first time. Once or twice I even found myself laughing at some of the jokes. (And how many books on magic, before or since, have funny bits? Well, *intentionally* funny bits, that is!) My first intention had been to rewrite certain passages, even whole pages, though the prospect wasn't terribly appealing. By good fortune, however, the more I read, the more persuaded I became that the book could stay much as it was when I chased those loose pages along a beach on the Costa del Sol.

Much as it was, but not of course entirely. There were a few ambiguities that deserved to be removed, while some things were best explained a little differently. Inevitably, too, given the lapse of time, several references

needed to be updated, some removed altogether. There were also, I confess, a few errors, relatively minor, that had to be put right. That said, one or two may still remain undetected.

The book was meant to introduce readers to the theory and practice of magic, no more than that. It's why the word 'Primer' features in the title. It does so by explaining what magic is about and how it is compatible both with common sense and what science tells us about the world around us. My ambition was to avoid the highfalutin language many writers on magic tend to favour, a tendency that nowadays seems more popular—and no less irritating—than ever. Above all, however, I wished to give readers a chance to try their hand at magic by offering them the wherewithal to do it. In the occult world, as much as any other, actions speak louder than words, however colourful or grandiose the language.

Throughout the book I have stressed what I call the 'sacramental' nature of every magical operation. A sacrament has been succinctly defined as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, something that works of itself not because of whoever works it. (Theologians describe this as '*opere operato*' not '*ex opere operantis*'.) This is what encouraged me to offer two rituals that readers might try for themselves. Over the past forty years many have done just that and of these a number have told me how their success encouraged them to explore magic further. Not all have followed the same path. And quite rightly so. Some were attracted to witchcraft and various forms of neo-paganism, while some favoured groups loyal to, for example, the Golden Dawn and Thelemic tradition.

Others just did their own thing. My hope is that this new edition of the book will encourage a new generation of readers do whatever they feel happy with.

Of those who contacted me one deserves mention. In his letter he described how his parents found *Magic: An Occult Primer* in his bedroom when he'd just turned fifteen. Believing him in thrall to Satan, they packed him off to a home for delinquent boys where life was unceasingly grim. Afterwards he paid his own way through college and now has a successful career, all of which was reassuring to learn. What cheered me most, however, was that his interest in magic—and, flatteringly, his fondness for this book—remain undiminished. Justin, this new edition is dedicated to you and to all those who enjoyed it the first time around. I hope others will now do the same..

Oh yes, one final thing. In the original text I used ‘he’, ‘him’ and ‘his’ throughout. In those days it was acceptable to use the masculine pronoun in a generic sense but such is no longer the case. I apologise to any reader irritated or offended by what at the time was common usage.

David Conway
Machynlleth
Wales
Alban Hefin 2015
(June 20–21)

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been something of an occult revival. Scarcely a month goes by without the appearance of a new book on the subject and the number of its adherents keeps growing apace. Many observers are baffled by this interest in such subjects as astrology, magic and witchcraft, an interest that seems at first glance quite alien to our scientific age. And yet it is itself a product of our age, being a natural reaction against the crass materialism propounded by science. Each of us, it seems, hopes there is more to him and to life than the bundle of molecules the experts allow. The more our betters set out to dismiss such hopes, the more we seek grounds for holding them.

Some have attributed this resurgence of interest to a yearning for the supernatural which all men inherit. That yearning is, after all, the basis of every religion. But whereas religion confines the supernatural within a formal theology which the faithful have to accept, occultism invites its followers to experience the supernatural for themselves. To this pragmatic approach it owes its survival, for unlike religion, occultism is not the custodian of elderly dogmas which science has shown to be untenable. Instead, it encourages the inquirer to work everything out for himself.

Interest in the occult—that is, in things concealed from the senses—is of course as old as mankind. However, only since the development of experimental science has it had to contend with a widespread belief that nothing exists outside our empirical experience. On one level this, the dominant belief of our age, seems inescapable, given the materialistic conclusions of science. And yet in subscribing to it we are in effect seeking to limit reality to the evidence of our senses; it is as if we were to say that America did not exist until Columbus first saw it. People interested in occult matters are unwilling to limit themselves in this way. They take the view that there may be a reality beyond the physical world with which we are familiar. For them occultism is a search for that other reality.

This search can take many forms. At the start of the last century interest in the occult was dominated by spiritualism, a movement that began in

America and spread rapidly to Europe. Eastern ideas, too, gained a following, thanks largely to the Theosophical Society which was founded by the Russian émigrée Helena Blavatsky. Other groups—for example the various Rosicrucian fraternities and Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophical movement—also sprang up, most of them still active today. However, much of their early appeal has been lost since each has gradually concocted its private theology which, as in the case of orthodox religion, is rarely consistent with science. For that reason most contemporary occultists prefer to search independently for their own meaning to life.

This is just as it should be, for one of the blessings of occultism, as we have noted, is that it offers each of us his own personal experience of the supernatural. By supernatural, let me repeat, I mean that dimension which is inaccessible to the senses, but is no less real for all that. Meditation techniques, about which we have lately heard a great deal, are among the means of approaching this transcendental reality. So too, in a less disciplined way, are the drugs and acoustic or visual experiments which are currently part of popular culture. At the same time, others are turning to telepathy, astrology and allied subjects with such enthusiasm that we seem well and truly to live in an Age of Aquarius, full, as the song says, of dreams and visions and mystic revelations.

In this book we shall examine the theory and practice of ritual magic. Such a book is, in my view, important because magic offers us the most effective way of contacting the supernatural reality we have been discussing. This I know from personal experience, which has further taught me that magic holds the key to many mysteries. That key is now within your grasp, for magic has one unique advantage over other forms of mystical tuition: it is the only one which guarantees that anyone who follows its procedures can apprehend and, equally important, comprehend the things that lie outside sensory experience. For those who long for immortality and those who, through meditation, drugs or extrasensory experience, have intimations of it, this book reveals the shortest and the surest path towards fulfilment.

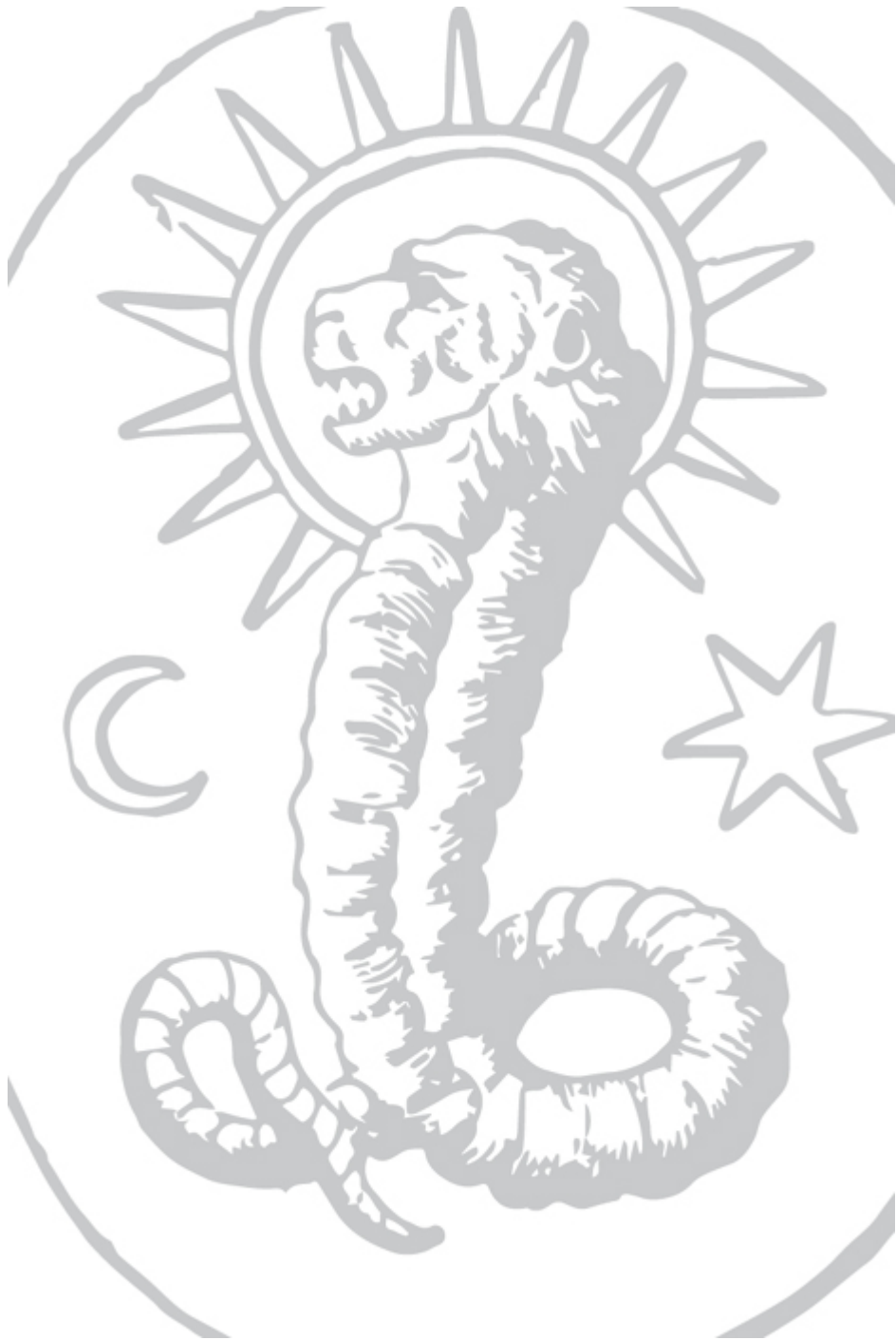
That, at least, is what I hope to have shown by the time you reach the final page. Before then, however, I hope also to have demonstrated that ritual magic, though long dismissed as empty superstition, is compatible with common sense and reason. It is compatible, too, with the most recent scientific thinking, which is why, in our approach to the subject, we shall

dispense with the weird and the wonderful in order to concentrate on what science has to teach us about the world and ourselves. Unless the theories of magic fit in with this teaching, they are clearly suspect from the start. If, on the other hand, they are found to be consistent with the postulates of science—however materialistic these are—then magic will have shown itself worthy of serious attention.

An exercise of this sort has not to my knowledge been attempted before. The truth is that in the past magic has fared rather badly at the hands of those who have written about it. What scholarly interest the subject has attracted comes from sociologists or anthropologists who are more concerned with the behaviour of magicians than the art they practise. In the same way, studies of old magical texts tend to dwell on the virtues of their literary style and not on the magic they taught. As for the few practising magicians who have put pen to paper, almost without exception they have preached only to the converted. Because of that their grandiloquent musings seem very remote from the world of today and seem to confirm the impression that magic has no contemporary significance whatever.

This book, therefore, is a belated defence of magic. It is also much more than that since it will give instructions for a number of magical operations which can be performed to one's advantage in everyday life. Magic, you see, does not demand to be taken on trust: the rites and spells described later really do work, as you will certainly discover if you turn your hand to them. Thanks to these, everyone, converted or not, has the chance of seeing for himself why magic, brought up to date, is supremely relevant to the occult-minded times in which we now live.

D.C.



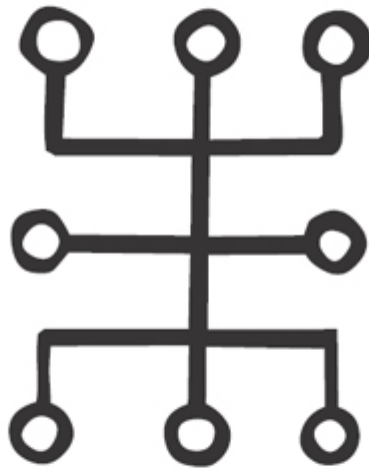
PART I

Magical Theory

CONTENTS

PART ONE: MAGICAL THEORY

- 1 Magic and Natural Law
- 2 The Magical Universe
- 3 The World and the Magician
- 4 Visualization and the Training of the Magician
- 5 The Meaning of Ritual



Malachim is the alphabet of messengers derived from the Hebrew and Greek alphabets first published by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa in the sixteenth century. See [Appendix 2](#) for the full alphabet.

MAGIC AND NATURAL LAW

The word 'magic' is commonly applied to any effect that has no observable cause. To small children the appearance of a rabbit in the conjuror's hat is a great feat of magic, although wiser folk know the beast was put there before the performance began. One of the distinctions between the magic our book is about and party tricks of this sort is that in the former the causes responsible for certain effects escape even the wisest among us. These causes exist, of course, but they owe nothing to the physical laws of our everyday world. Hence their magical aspect and our consequent difficulty in believing them possible.

The aim of this book is quite straightforward. It is to show that such magic actually works. To that end precise instructions will be given later and any reader so inclined can try a little magic for himself. However, for the benefit of those who consider magic an illusion, we shall set about examining the theory behind it. We shall see whether the supernatural retains its credibility in an age when science claims that only those things exist which can be objectively experienced under given conditions. Unless we establish the validity of magic within this scientific context it deserves to remain the cultural and historical curiosity sceptics believe it to be.

Throughout this chapter we shall try to maintain the empirical approach demanded by science. We shall adopt the view that there is no such thing as the supernatural. Whatever exists must be natural, and will therefore not contradict what we already know about the workings of nature. Even so, we shall ultimately have to deduce certain conclusions from the evidence presented to us. There is nothing unscientific about this. Far from being a body of absolute knowledge, modern science is itself largely speculative and offers its own tentative generalisations from facts it has experimentally obtained.

In his monumental work *The Golden Bough*, Sir James G. Frazer describes magic as a spurious system of natural law. He means presumably that it is based on imaginary laws which have nothing in common with the natural laws known to science. To some extent the criticism is deserved, for successive magicians have been content to elaborate their system without pausing to consider the value of the premises on which it is based.

Unfortunately, we are handicapped in our desire to take natural law as our starting-point because in spite of recent developments in radio-astronomy and physics, the quantum sort in particular, even scientists remain much in the dark as to the real nature and manner of working of the cosmos. We cannot even say whether our universe had a beginning, since all that a study of galaxies suggests is that it is expanding all the time. This expansion has led some cosmologists to argue that matter is being continuously created throughout space and so is constantly pushing outwards. (How 'something' might have emerged from 'nothing' is a question normally left to philosophers.)

Others suggest that thousands of millions of years ago the universe, then a dense mass, exploded, hurling matter in all directions. According to them the present expansion is simply the prolonged after-effect of that primordial bang. The latter theory is the more widely accepted, but interesting though it is, it again tells us nothing about the genesis of the original dense mass nor the ultimate destiny of its fragments.

What we do know for certain is that in the vast cosmos there exists one particularly bright igneous star which embraces nine major planets within its gravitational field. That bright star is the Sun which together with the planets and several assorted asteroids makes up what we call the solar system. Of these planets our Earth is perhaps the most fortunate, since its surface and atmosphere are, we are told, conducive to the production of stable molecular structures formed from atoms of carbon and charged with electrons. These molecules have the knack of extending themselves into chains, linking with their neighbours to form an organized sequence and finally producing bigger structures called polymers. Among the polymers are those extremely complicated substances known as proteins which by a subtle variation of their constituent amino-acids are able to generate a wide range of complex forms. Most important of these molecular structures are the nucleoproteins. These are the self-replicating raw materials which, as chromosomes, make up the bricks of life that are living cells. Biological evolution begins when these single living cells, their nuclei swimming in cytoplasmic jelly, develop into higher life forms. From the earliest times the immediate ambition of each cell would have been to ensure its own survival and this must have led to competition for the raw materials required for that purpose. In this way a pattern was established which characterises all subsequent organic evolution, for it is the fight for

survival that has determined the twin processes of genetic mutation and natural selection.

Summed up very briefly, the doctrine of organic evolution contends that a unified common ancestor is responsible for the diversity of complex organisms existing in the world today. This was dimly perceived by the philosophers of ancient Greece and revived by the scientist-philosophers of the eighteenth century. It was Charles Darwin, however, who first stated the doctrine as we now know it and backed up that statement with a wealth of data from all fields of biology. Since then palaeontology has increased our knowledge of early forms so that we can now regard it as adequately proven that 'life' on earth has always consisted of an orderly progression from relatively simple structures to the wonder that is man himself. Despite the wonder, however, the appearance of man was no mere accident, and *Homo sapiens* like all else in nature has his appropriate place on the evolutionary tree. Sharing the same branch on that tree are his closest cousins, the apes.

The physical resemblances between apes and man are too obvious to be stated. It is reported that when the first orang-outang was exhibited in Paris in the eighteenth century, the archbishop of that city waited outside its cage to baptize the creature as soon as it emitted a sound resembling human speech. Since then zoologists and anatomists have confirmed the fundamental similarity between man and ape, archbishop and orang-outang. Psychologists have even drawn on their observations of ape behavior in order to explain human conduct. Small wonder then that for purposes of classification man and ape have been lumped together in the order known as Primates, and evidence of our common ancestor is sought among the fossilized remains of monkeys. So far the search for the first *Homo sapiens* or even the so-called 'missing link' between him and his simian forebears has been unrewarding and we cannot say for certain where or when man emerged from some advanced type of anthropoid. In terms of geological time the transformation may well have been an abrupt one. Certainly by the end of the Pleistocene era, varieties of *Homo sapiens* had achieved a fairly wide geographical distribution.

What we do know is that somewhere in this period the evolutionary process reached a point at which the potential hominid embodied all the characteristics required to accomplish the transition from animal to man. Among these characteristics were an upright posture, vocal cords which

already allowed him to communicate in a rudimentary way with his fellows, and hands with which he could manipulate objects. But above all man's brain provided the impetus for what would finally set him apart from other animals. It has been attributed variously to divine inspiration, spontaneous intuition and a cervical irrigation of nucleic acid, but whatever the reason, man suddenly became aware of his individuality and of his independence from the world around him. This stupendous realization turned what had formerly been a brute consciousness based on instinct to the self-consciousness that is born of an idea. Man had stepped outside himself into the realm of conceptual as opposed to merely perceptive experience. Language enabled him to give verbal expression to that experience and gradually he started to fashion and use ideas in the same way that his supple fingers already fashioned tools. He was still an animal, but an animal that reasoned. He was still a creature of the Earth, but now he inhabited what Teilhard de Chardin termed its 'noosphere' (from the Greek *νοῦς*, meaning mind). From then on man was endowed with the unique gift of being able to control his own development.

This rapid and all-too-superficial review of evolution makes it abundantly clear that the human mind is indissolubly linked with the physiological process of evolution. We must at once discount the idea that at a certain point in prehistory God breathed into man a soul which gave him his humanity and a special place in the natural (and 'supernatural') scheme of things. Evolution is dramatic enough without having recourse to a *deus ex machina*. By insisting on the link between physical and mental development we are from the outset avoiding also any suggestion of dualism, according to which man may be viewed in terms of a mind and a body, the ghost inside the machine. Such a view is questionable, if only because of what we know of the causal links between body and mind. From our own experience most of us are well aware of how excessive alcohol in the bloodstream can affect our thinking processes. Similarly the use of hallucinogenic drugs may bring about alarming and beautiful mental reactions.

Now if, as we have said, mind is organic inasmuch as it is completely identifiable with and attributable to bodily processes, it follows that it must coexist in some way or other with all living forms of physical life. Not only must it coexist with them, but it must also develop with them throughout their evolutionary course. Although man began to think

conceptually only when his brain, the necessary physiological apparatus, had developed to a point of refinement capable of it, there is no reason to suppose that his immediate ancestors were completely incapable of thought. Who would deny, for example, that a chimpanzee possesses a mind of its own? Indeed, assuming, as we must, that mind and matter are inextricably linked, then the mere fact that the chimpanzee has a body is sufficient proof that it also has a mind.

Philosophical proofs are unnecessary, however, since Nature herself shows quite plainly that all living things can think. We have already mentioned the instinctive consciousness that man has always shared with the lower animals. Even now, much of his thinking differs only in degree and not in kind from their own. But this type of thought must not be confused with the conceptual variety which, thanks to the peculiar complexities of his cervical cortex, is man's special privilege. We are here discussing those thoughts which arise from the stimulation of one or more of our senses, and which represent our reactions to the outside world. This is the type of thinking that is said to stem from an organism's awareness of its environment and the effect that environment will have on its well-being.

For example, if I see a large obstacle in my path when I am walking down the road I shall try to avoid it, if it is going to impede my progress. A dog will do the same in a similar situation, as will a worm. Can we infer from this that the worm has a mind? I think we must; if we grant that the higher vertebrates have minds, there is no reason why, in view of evolution, some degree of mentation should take place within lesser creatures. Indeed, scientists have shown that flatworms are capable of memory and that even single celled protozoa will react to things around them in the manner they deem best for themselves. If it comes to that, even plants, consciously or unconsciously, will turn towards the sun so as to benefit from its light.

The inescapable conclusion from all this is that nature must be psychologically directed towards the satisfaction of its needs; the bee stores honey in a hexagonal cell, a form which mathematicians have shown to be the most economical for this purpose; the ant establishes for itself a well-ordered society; the homing pigeon crosses hundreds of miles of unknown sky to regain its loft. Clearly, proof that nature has a mind is

as much the result of observation as it is of logical deduction from the very existence of matter.

That there is something which may be called ‘mental’ coexistent with life is a fundamental belief of magic, and a belief shared by many scientists.¹ However, while the scientists are prepared to accept it as a working hypothesis which experience appears to confirm, the magician ventures to speculate on the nature of this universal mind. In doing so he is bound to incur the displeasure of those who insist that only a rigorously scientific approach confined to empirical observation can possess any validity. It is true that once he abandons such restraints the magician is bound to be led to conclusions that are as yet scientifically unproven. However, these conclusions, provided they satisfy the essential conditions of observation and experience, do not deserve to be rejected out of hand. Reason and induction are perfectly respectable aids to knowledge. These led Democritus in the fifth century B.C. to describe the atom, although only in the second half of the nineteenth century did technology produce the instruments needed to show he was right. It is an all-too-common presupposition of allegedly non-presupposing scientists that nothing can exist until it has been detected by them or the apparatus they have invented.

We have said that the magician speculates on the nature of the *universal* mind. For to him this mind is universal, although it is experimentally observable only in the behaviour of living organisms. But the distinction between living matter and dead matter is at best a unclear. After all, the origin of life itself is now accredited to an adventitious combination of ‘dead’ chemicals. In any case all matter, by its very existence in the universe, has ‘life.’ To say that a stone ‘lives’ is not as ridiculous as it may appear. This is especially true if one recalls that within the stone's molecular structure there are sub-atomic particles whizzing around in a manner that seems far from dead. In any case, we have already noted that if evolutionary theory were carried to its logical conclusion, then mind or life would have to be regarded as implicit in all things, essential aspects of that same reality of which matter is the external appearance.

The assumption that life is natural to matter means that nature is both self-generating and self-perpetuating. In addition, because some form of mentation is present in matter, it must follow that these are to some extent conscious processes. Every plant and animal must share ‘spiritually’ in the

life process of the world's 'soul' just as it participates materially in the organization of the world's 'body'. This interpretation is by no means new; it is that of the early Greek philosophers, in particular the Stoics, and reappeared during the Renaissance. It may also be latent in Descartes, whose dualist assertion 'I think, therefore I am' can lead quite happily to the Hobbesian paraphrase 'I think therefore matter can think' and, later, to Bergson's theory of the *élan vital*. Nor has any of this been contradicted by modern science. On the contrary, the discovery of ribo-nucleic acid (RNA) and subsequent views on the molecular origin of thought serve only to confirm it.

When we observe the life force that permeates the universe we see that it manifests itself in process and movement. Because this movement is deducible to rational laws of motion we may safely conclude that the universe, or rather its all-pervading vitalism, is itself both orderly and rational. And yet the world has its share of disorder and destruction—at times it may even seem that chaos rather than unity or harmony characterizes the universe. However, even if we admit that the actual creation of the universe, if it ever was created, is nothing more than a vast cosmic accident, the fact remains that it is subject to certain laws which arise from the very nature of matter. The disorder and destruction, the freaks and curiosities, can all be explained by material causes—that is, by natural law working out its irrevocable process when physical conditions chance to be uncommon. Far from proving the absence of law in the universe, the apparent exceptions serve only to emphasize its efficacy. Nature never contradicts herself. Were she to do so, there would be no causality.²

So far we have posited that a certain life force is present everywhere. It follows then that the world we know may be only a small part of the external manifestation of that force. There is a strong likelihood of it having manifested itself elsewhere in the cosmos, though it is too soon to be certain. It is also possible that though at present identifiable only when bound up with matter, life may in certain circumstances exist independently of it or, to remain true to materialism, in material forms not directly recognizable by our senses. There is no need to stress again the inadequacy of those organs: viewed through the microscope a drop of water is seen to contain myriad living forms, all invisible to the naked eye; there are myriad other forms invisible to the microscope.

After its ubiquity the most important thing about the life force is the rational motivation which can be discerned behind the working of natural law. It is on account of this that pan-vitalism has often been expressed in metaphysical terms like universal law, Providence, or simply God. To do this, however, is to bring in the *deus ex machina* we have been at such pains to keep out. The atheist will be all too ready to tell us that to deify a natural, albeit unfathomable, process is to explain one mystery by substituting another. It is like the old storyteller who claimed the world rested on the back of a tortoise, and when asked what the tortoise was standing on replied that it rested on the back of an elephant.

Having said that, I am afraid at this point we are nevertheless going to smuggle in the tortoise. We may even need the elephant as well. The fact is that provided we know exactly what we mean, there is no real harm in calling the life force 'God'. Those confirmed atheists who are still with us need not drop out, however, for we shall attribute to 'God' nothing more than what can reasonably be attributed to the life force. God is merely another name for it. A better name, too, for those words 'life force' have a curiously old-fashioned ring to them, reminiscent of the nineteen-twenties and 'thirties when New Thought, eurhythmics and George Bernard Shaw were all the vogue. Admittedly the word 'God' is of even older vintage, but at least it is more economical. In using it, however, we are not indulging in that parochial type of pantheism which sees the solar universe as a living being with God as its soul and the sun as its heart. On the contrary—and, alas, here comes the elephant—there are grounds for arguing that if the universe is but a visible manifestation of God, then God the unmanifest must also exist. If the Creator is within everything, He must also transcend everything, for the Creator cannot be confined within the created. If this is true, then God becomes the formless one behind the world of form, transcendent as well as immanent. Again, the Atheists need not despair, for by accepting the possibility of a transcendent deity we are simply accepting, possibly without much philosophical justification,³ a Great Unmanifest, which some agnostic philosophers have likened to x , the unknown quantity in algebra. Fortunately the whole question is irrelevant to the practice of magic, which involves no more than the application of certain natural laws. It is quite immaterial whether or not these laws presuppose a divine lawgiver.

Because he knows that mind characterises the entire universe, the magician is able to enjoy what we may call a unitary view of nature. For him the universe is exactly what the word implies—a unity. This in turn leads him to postulate that a law manifestly in operation in one part of the universal system is equally operative throughout the whole. The consequence of this last premise is that, since the universe is in itself a complete whole, some characteristic of the major components must be shared by the lesser components; animal, vegetable or mineral. We have, for example, seen how varying combinations of identical molecules lie behind the evolution of all matter; the visible results may differ but the essential properties of matter remain the same. All things therefore have the same constituents and obey the same natural law, and behind their outward form there is but one mind. In magic it is this universal ‘oneness’ that has long been the object of study and research. It represents for the magician, as it must also for the scientist, the secret of nature. It is the unifying principle behind the intricacy of natural phenomena, reconciling the unity of substance with the heterogeneity of form.

In magic the underlying similarity between different things is often systematized by identifying certain correspondences between them. From time immemorial magicians have sought to establish the subtle affinity that exists between certain planets, metals, jewels, birds, beasts, herbs, colours, flowers and scents. A great deal of patience and ingenuity have been expended on this formidable task, but observation and experiment have also played their part. Magic is, after all, far more than an academic exercise. Nowadays many of the correspondences that have been elaborated may appear crude and naive, but the fault often lies not in the correspondences themselves but in either the archaic way in which they are expressed or the quaint reasons thought up to justify them. We must allow for the fact that much extant magical writing dates from the early Renaissance and reflects the mental and cultural climate of its time. Some of these writings may be downright silly and many others inconsistent with what we now know to be true. However, while it is only right to discard everything that strikes us as foolish, it would clearly be imprudent to reject the rest out of hand.

The most important of the universal correspondences are those that exist between ourselves and God. Although we know well enough that man is no more than the product of a natural evolutionary scheme, we must

nevertheless accord him a special place within it. He is its fulfilment. If the material world is but a reflection of God, it is in man that God is truly reflected. Like the universe itself, only on a far smaller scale, man is a psycho-biological unit; by studying that unit, the microcosm, we are able to gain a more profound understanding of the universe, the macrocosm.

We can confidently expect God, the sum of all things, to be everything that we ourselves are, only magnified. We may even go as far as to liken Him and the universe in which He expresses Himself to the human organism expressed on a vast scale. Man, the miniature organism, is able by introspection to expand his consciousness so that his inner self reaches out and embraces the universe. Clearly, the closer the miniature resembles its subject, the greater the expansion that is possible. Thus it is above all the complete man who, once he has experienced every human impulse and integrated them in one balanced personality, is able to reach the heart of the universe wherein lies union with God. This is the supreme achievement of magic, and it is summed up by Aleister Crowley as ‘the raising of the whole man in perfect balance to the power of Infinity’. In short, it is the apotheosis of the self.

If the universe is man on a gigantic scale, the mysterious forces that move it may be equated with those that move man. Through them is woven the fabric of all visible things and it is the magician's task to discover their true nature. To this end he need only cultivate the forces already latent in himself, for they are, of course, the same as those that regulate our world and propel the furthestmost star. ‘Know thyself’ was the sound advice given at Delphi.

In order to make them easier to comprehend, the major cosmic forces have been named in magic after various planets and the gods and goddesses of the ancient world. However, this personification is merely a device to help us appreciate their real significance. Even more personalised are the lesser forces, which are dubbed angelic or demonic according to their function. In the Western hemisphere these often have Jewish names which are ceremonially invoked in magical operations based on a system known as the Kabbalah. Elsewhere in the world their names are different, as we shall see in [Chapter 7](#) when we describe an Egyptian ritual, but that need not disturb us; the forces they represent are still the same.

Apart from the results they achieve and the names they have been given, little is known about such forces. They presumably represent different

aspects of the universal mind, its thoughts and intentions which, unseen and inexorable, move through the universe in pursuit of some divine ambition. Viewed from our perspective there are forces that sponsor growth and conservation while others cause decay and destruction. Some promote love and peace, while others, no less potent, are harbingers of hatred and war. Because of these differences it is possible to describe some forces as positive and others as negative. No moral judgment is implied by this classification, and both types of force are equally necessary. Indeed, the theory of opposites is extremely ancient, and many ethical systems advise us to achieve a balance between the opposites in our own character. The philosopher Hegel is well known for his emphasis on the need for a negative as well as a positive element in life. Because the first of these discards the old and ushers in the new, progress is possible only when they act together. This synthesis between the two is the goal of the dedicated magician who, having experienced and mastered all things, becomes the complete man, the true likeness of God.

The power that is used in magic is derived from the forces we have been describing and so comes from both within and outside ourselves. It is formed by linking one aspect of the magician's personality with a corresponding aspect of the cosmic mind. This at once sets up a current of power which the magician can draw upon for his purposes. It is not unlike flicking a switch to turn on the electric light. However, just as electricity requires an efficient wiring system, so magical power always needs a suitable conductor through which to flow. This conductor is established by the performance of an appropriate ritual, every detail of which contributes to the final influx of power. It is because each detail is so important that the rituals given in this book should be scrupulously followed. This is not only because the success of the operation will depend on it, but because, as in the case of electricity, magic can be dangerous when tampered with.

In the beginning of this chapter, we compared man to a glorified monkey and we have finished by likening him to God. You will recall that the reason for his elevation was his unique ability to think in conceptual terms. This meant that He could form thoughts that were not directly prompted by sense-perception, though derived perhaps from perceptive experience, and then go on to examine their content objectively. All along, however, we have been careful to insist that even conceptual thinking is based only on molecular processes within the brain and is susceptible to

physiological changes; our judgment as well as our sense-perceptions may be impaired by alcohol or narcotics. But perhaps we have not sufficiently stressed that the influence of the mind on bodily functions is equally strong. Only as we learn more about the psychosomatic origin of many diseases are we slowly beginning to realize how powerful our thoughts can be. The time has therefore come for us to consider the nature of thought itself. For our difficulty, as we come to the end of this chapter, is that so far we have not been able to identify in man anything which might suggest that he can transcend the clay from which he is fashioned. Unless we do find something, we shall never succeed in getting him or magic off the ground.

The first thing to be said about thought is that it cannot be destroyed. It appears that every thought leaves an indelible imprint on the neuron that sponsored it; a suspension of consciousness, as for example under hypnosis, may be all that is needed to revive it. That is why most psychoanalytic therapy is concerned with teaching a patient how to cope with the subconscious memories stored within his brain. Thus once they are born, thoughts may exist quite independently of the original thinking process. The most obvious examples outside the store-rooms of our subconscious are the things human beings create—from buildings to ball-bearings, from poetry to pin-tables—all of which are the material expression of what once were only ideas.

Most thoughts remain in the mind of the thinker. Yet there are grounds for stating that even these enjoy a form of existence. This is because thought is the energy generated by the molecular reaction involved in thinking—and, like all energy, it cannot be destroyed. What happens to it, then? The occultist will answer that if the thought is powerful enough it may imprint itself on the etheric or astral atmosphere. Etheric and astral are fancy but useful words intended to convey the notion of a non-material, or possibly, semi-material dimension not normally recognizable by our senses. The latter are of course able to respond only to the material world of which our body is part. This imprinting of thought on these suprasensible planes is the explanation often given for the characteristic atmosphere surrounding certain places. It is known that people who are in some way more sensitive than the rest of us react at once to the atmosphere of a former battlefield, or a room where, for example, a murder took place. It is as if the feelings of those participating in the tragedy were raised to

such a pitch of intensity that they still linger in the air. A great many hauntings can probably be explained in this way. So much for intense thoughts, but that still leaves us with the less forceful ones that come into being almost constantly. The occult explanation is that if these are too weak to enjoy any lasting permanence they simply dissolve into whatever aspect of the cosmic mind corresponds most closely with them.

Perhaps the best illustration of the occultist view of thought is by means of the over-worked comparison with a radio wave. The brain then becomes the broadcasting studio from which the thought radiates. We become aware of radio waves only if they are picked up and densified by a suitable receiver, but they exist independently nevertheless. All the receiver has done is make them accessible to our senses, just as written verses express a poet's vision in a form others can appreciate.

The theory that thoughts, like radio waves, are imprinted on what, for want of a better term, we might call (as does traditional occultism) the 'ether' or 'astral' is not without scientific foundation. We know, for example, that the thinking process is accompanied by tiny rhythmic variations in the electric charges that go on inside the brain. It is possible that these charges may somehow mold the 'ether' into what we might call a thought form. Nor is such a theory confined to a few starry eyed occultists; it was also put forward by my compatriot, Professor H. H. Price, who imagined the universe populated by mental images, each with a semi-physical existence in the 'psychic ether'. According to him these ideas are independent entities which, given certain conditions, may integrate to form vast patterns that transcend individual consciousness. All of which is remarkably similar to the occult view that powerful thoughts impose their own peculiar imprint on the astral, while weaker ones blend with related aspects of the cosmic mind. The psychic patterns described by Professor Price may well provide the images that make up the archetypes which are such an important feature of Jungian psychology. Interesting though these theories are, they remain only theories. Fortunately for us, the independent existence of thought may be confirmed by the phenomenon of telepathy.

I say 'may be' because only a minority of researchers has so far accepted that the evidence adduced in favour of telepathy is persuasive enough to merit serious consideration. These have included Sir Alister Hardy, Emeritus Professor of Zoology at Oxford University, who told the British Association for the Advancement of Science that the existence of

telepathy had been ‘scientifically demonstrated’, a view expressed also by Professor C. D. Broad. Much of the evidence available to them was the result of patient research conducted by Dr J. B. Rhine at Duke University, North Carolina, complemented by equally meticulous work carried out by the Society for Psychical Research in London. More recently an experiment sponsored by Harvard University seems to demonstrate—to the consternation of sceptics—that simple messages can indeed be passed from one person to another without physical contact between them. As one of those involved, theoretical physicist Giulio Ruffini, declared in a BBC interview, the result shows that one can indeed ‘transmit information directly from one brain to another brain without any intervention of the senses’. For our present purpose it is enough to accept that however rarely telepathy occurs under scientifically acceptable conditions, the few times it has done so are enough to show that whereas brain and mind may be two aspects of the same entity, the thoughts they jointly produce acquire an identity independent of both.

Of the thoughts we have, the vast majority concern ourselves. These consist not only of the thoughts that arise from our day-to-day experience, like going to work or filling in our tax returns, but also of that deep-seated self-awareness which only conceptual thinking allows, an unremitting consciousness of our own identity. As a result of such preoccupation, a replica of ourselves is built up in thought form on the astral plane or, if you prefer, the psychic ether. In occultism the name often given to this extension of our physical selves is the astral body or body of light. It is believed to be composed of a finer and subtler material than our physical bodies, but even so can on occasion become visible. The well-attested phenomenon of bilocation, as in the case of the late Padre Pio, may probably be explained as the appearance of the astral self in one place while the physical self is elsewhere. The fact that the physical self is usually asleep when bilocation occurs suggests that consciousness may sometimes be transferred from the physical body to its astral counterpart. With practice the transference can be made voluntarily, and then it becomes known as astral projection. In [Chapter 8](#) we shall examine how this is done. To step out into the astral body and observe one's physical self sleeping nearby is an exhilarating experience. In one second it refutes materialism more effectively than hours of argument or a successful canter through the Zener cards.

The fact that the astral body enjoys an existence of its own has one further consequence which will not have escaped the astute reader; being independent of the physical body it can survive death. Here lies our only hope of immortality, for we must agree with the materialists that when our brain ceases to function our individual existence should logically come to an end. Such is probably the fate of most living creatures. In the case of man, however, his consciousness can on death pass to the astral body he has spent a lifetime creating.⁴ His personality, having survived intact, can then withdraw to the astral planes where it will begin the next phase of existence. Even so, our astral bodies, like the incarnate personalities from which they are derived, are really no more than an outward expression of ourselves. With time they too must be shed, so that only the individual self, the spark of consciousness which may be the quintessence of several personalities, is left. Many occultists propose that if it still has lessons to learn from the world, or, if you like, still has a karmic debt to satisfy, it must return there. This is not done by direct incarnation, which would be contrary to the scientific view of man as the psycho-biological product of evolution, but by associating, in some way at present unknown to us, with the nascent personality which a baby creates within its mother's womb, as it slowly becomes aware of itself. If, on the other hand, the individual has no further cause to return to the world, he is free to proceed along a path of spiritual evolution which leads eventually to the beatific experience of God's true self. A secret benefit of magic is that by understanding and practising the art, we commence that journey here and now. In the following pages we shall take our first cautious steps towards what Plato calls the Empyrean Light.

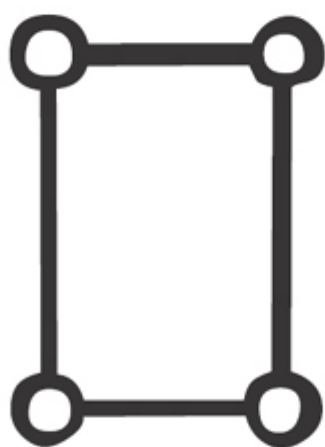
¹ Other scientists hold a different view. They contend that evolution may on occasion produce novel features such as the emergence of the living from the non-living. In the same way the 'mental' is said by them to be a novel feature that has emerged from the 'non-mental'.

² Recently physicists have encountered molecular behavior that is both irrational and non-causal, but it maybe that such apparent exceptions are due more to gaps in our understanding than to a perverse quirk in an otherwise rational system. This will be considered further in Chapter 3

³ Roman Catholicism is now the only important religion still to claim that the existence of God is deducible by reason alone. Three arguments are commonly used in support of this natural theology: (1) The ontological argument, according to which the concept of an infinite God, since it is greater than the mind conceiving it, must mean that God has an independent existence, (2) The cosmological argument, which is really the old Aristotelian argument from first causes and which makes God the first cause and the universe its effect. (3) The teleological argument, which posits that the complex organization of the universe testifies to the existence of a Supreme Intelligence.

Many modern philosophers have exercised themselves in refuting these arguments, Kant and Hume being among the most successful.

[4](#) On this point see in particular *The Subtle Body and its Variants*, notably Chapter 10, by the analytical psychologist Marie-Louise von Franz, in her lifetime the closest collaborator of Carl Gustav Jung.



THE MAGICAL UNIVERSE

After our bird's-eye view of magical theory we need to examine more closely certain aspects of it before going on to tackle the practical implications. Magic works regardless of whether the magician knows the reasons for it, but that should not deter us from trying to understand why. To go through the ritual motions with no clear idea of what they are all about is mere superstition, not magic. In any case the magician should expect more from his magic than mere signs and wonders. If these are all he is after, he would be better advised to take up conjuring, which is far less trouble. The enduring rewards of magical study are not the temporal benefits it brings but a spiritual maturity that affords a more profound understanding of the universe we live in. Let us then examine that universe in occultist terms, beginning, appropriately enough, at the beginning.¹

God and the universe which is His self-expression, have always existed: visible and invisible making up the divine being. Because the universe is, so to speak, God's awareness of Himself, at once the product and expression of His mind, creation is conceived by many occultists as a series of thoughts emanating from their divine source, often described as a series of ineffable lights. The analogy with light is a useful one, for just as white light is composed of different colours, so the original creative thought is held to contain the potentialities of the various types of force active throughout the universe.

According to one tradition to be examined later, God brought into being ten of these lights, each containing less and less of the divine essence until the final one formed the world of dense matter. This initial emanation may also be viewed as the unfolding of a divine language, for many occultists have long supposed that these creative thoughts must have been expressed verbally, like our own more humble thoughts. For this reason they often speak of creation in terms of words and the holy letters of which they are composed, thereby making the secret world of God a world of language in which powerful names unfold in accordance with the divine will.

This particular theory of creation is principally derived from an occult tradition known as the Kabbalah, the *hokmah nistara* or secret wisdom of the Jewish people. The word 'Kabbalah' means tradition, and it was

supposedly bequeathed by one generation to the next long before it came to be written down.² What exactly is the knowledge it contains? In essence it is a mystical vision of the ultimate reality behind the world of form. Like all mysticism it is a confrontation between the individual and his creator, a deeply personal experience which no one else can share. Fortunately for us, most mystics have endeavoured to describe or formulate their experience as best they can, although the words at their disposal are inadequate to depict the full wonder of what they experienced. To a large extent the mystic is forced to use the language and ready-made symbolism of his community, because these alone are comprehensible to his fellows and possibly himself as well. In this way he ends up fitting a moment of sudden illumination into a conventional framework—a *corpus symbolicum* representative of his time and cultural background. Thus although mystics everywhere, be they Hindu, Christian or Buddhist, perceive the same reality, they inevitably clothe it in whatever religious trappings are most familiar to them. This is why Hindu visionaries never see the Virgin Mary and Christians are not brought face to face with Vishnu.

For this reason the mystical content of the Kabbalah has been translated into traditional Jewish concepts, and systematized according to a particular reading of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. This may have been a subterfuge on the part of early Kabbalists to make their teachings acceptable to rabbinical authority, though as devout Jews they may have been only too happy to rest their philosophical theories on the bedrock of revelation. For them, the Pentateuch became as a result the *explicit* (or, if you like, exoteric) form of the Torah, the law of God, being a coded account of the hidden processes at work within the divine life. As such, the text became less important than the concealed meaning which they strove to wrest from it, notably by experimenting with the numerical value of words and the letters that comprise them.³ By these means letters recurring in different combinations could, it was believed, be made to disclose different aspects of the world, a fact that led one Kabbalist to exclaim, 'In every word shine many lights.'

In contrast to its exoteric form, the esoteric Torah was regarded as a pre-existent being made up of the one great name of God.⁴ This was the *Torah kedumah*, or primordial Torah, whose creation was identical with the cosmogonic process that occurred when the divine name emerged under the appearance of light from God's invisible essence. For the Kabbalist, the

world was not formed out of nothing, a *creatio ex nihilo*, but was instead an unfolding of the potencies already contained within the *Ein Sof*, the infinite God, beginningless and eternal. In His transcendence God would be totally incomprehensible were it not that His nature may be deduced from a knowledge of His attributes. We can declare therefore that by the finite act of creation God the Infinite ceased to be a formal abstraction and manifested Himself as a dynamic unity marvelously rich in content. This means that creation was largely a theogonic process by which God emerged from His concealment in order to reveal Himself in His creation. The world in which we live can therefore be regarded as a world of divine being where the secret and the visible are wonderfully reconciled, just as creation itself was the exoteric aspect of a mysterious process taking place within the godhead. When the Kabbalists described these processes they often spoke of four realms, a sort of spiritual hierarchy consisting of *Atziluth*, the realm of divine emanation, *Ber'iah* the realm of creation *Yetzirah*, the realm of formation, and *Assiah*, the realm of activation. These realms, like the ten ineffable lights, were not successive but were held to exist simultaneously, being representative only of the manner in which the power of God manifests itself.

In Kabbalistic terminology each of the divine emanations is called a *sefira* and together they make up the ten *sefiroth*. The word 'sefira' simply means a number or category. The sefiroth represent different aspects of the cosmic mind. They are manifested also in the forces that move the universe, and as we ourselves are a miniature of that universe, they represent also the forces that move us. Here we return to the idea of the micro/macrocosm whereby the world and God are wholly contained and reflected in man. The complete man is thus the perfect man, the Adam Kadmon or primordial being, identifiable with God in His act of creation (see Ezek i, 26 and Dan. vii, 13). This then is the aim of the magician when by the correct use of ritual he seeks to realize the magical nexus between himself and the cosmos.

For the sake of convenience the sefiroth are traditionally set out in a diagram known as the *Etz Hayim* or Tree of Life (see p. 61). This is often referred to as the Great Glyph, and commonly described as an all-embracing pattern of both the universe and man. In the *Sefer HaBahir* we find the following passage:

*It is I who have planted this tree, so that the world may gaze at it in wonder. With it I have encompassed the All and have named it the All; all things depend on it and all emanate from it; all things have need of it, look upon it and yearn for it, and from it all souls must proceed.*⁵

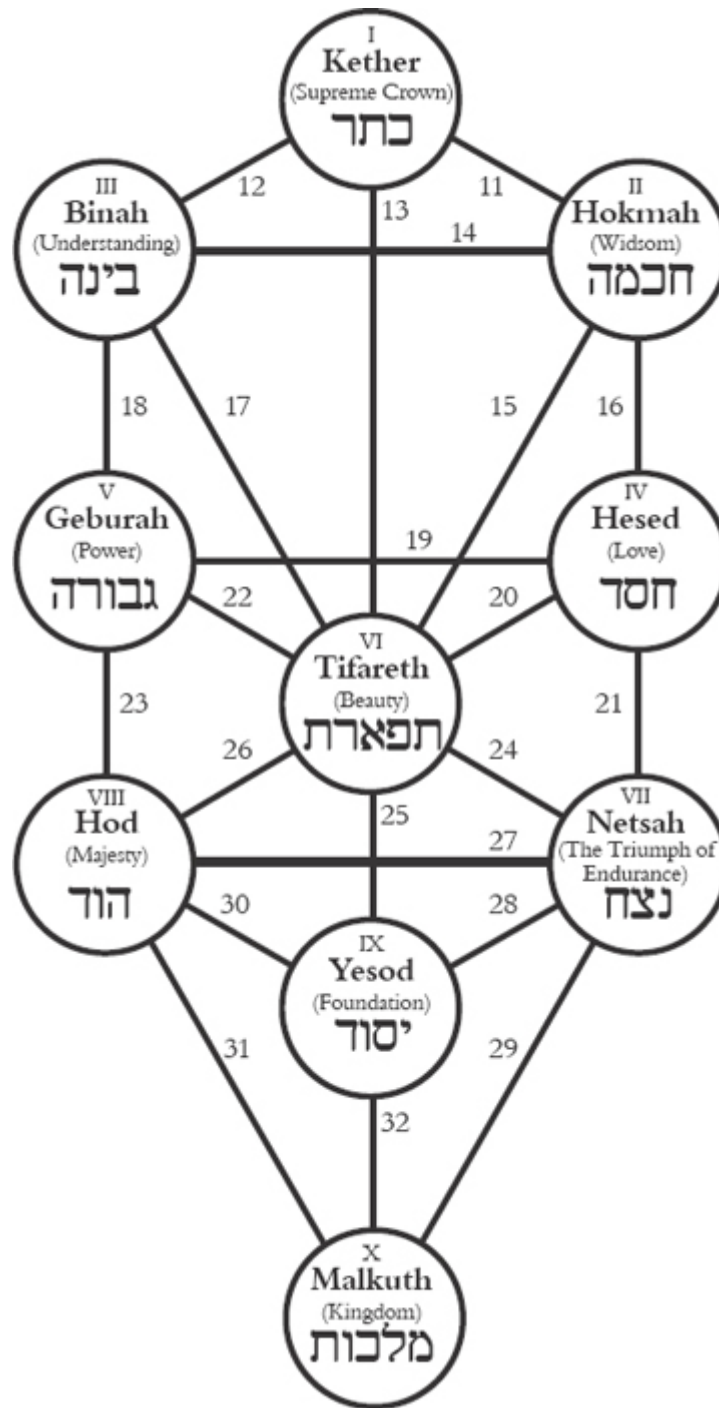
The All is present in the Tree because its branches fully reflect the unity of our personality, the underlying pattern of the universe and the true nature of God. It is as if the whole of life were spread out before us in a way that is at once ingeniously simple and terrifyingly complex, a combination which is part of the perennial fascination of the Kabbalah which Eliphas Lévi once described in lyrical terms:

*On penetrating into the sanctuary of the Kabbalah one is seized with admiration in the presence of a doctrine so logical, so simple and at the same time so absolute. The essential union of ideas and signs; the consecration of the most fundamental realities by primitive characters; the trinity of words, letters and numbers; a philosophy as simple as the alphabet, profound and infinite as the Word; theorems more complete and luminous than those of Pythagoras; a theology which may be summed up on the fingers; an infinite which can be held in the hollow of an infant's hand; ten figures and twenty-two letters, a triangle, a square and a circle. Such are the elements of the Kabbalah.*⁶

It follows that if we want to understand God, the universe and ourselves, we must learn the meaning of each of the sefiroth on the Tree of Life. This is not a gruelling exercise like learning irregular French verbs, and no one need be put off by the unfamiliar names. A great deal of Hebrew terminology used by modern Kabbalists is mere convention, much as Italian is still used in musical composition; despite the *legatos* and *accelerandos*, good music, like magic, is completely international. If you study the Tree intuitively as well as intelligently, relating it to what you know of life and yourself, you will soon grasp its universal significance. In no time at all you will be able to fit your feelings, experiences and all you see around you into the appropriate sefiroth. According to the enthusiasts you will then have found the answer to almost every question and be a little closer to the meaning of life.

A detailed explanation of the Tree would fill a book and be a daunting challenge, both to the writer and, because of its inevitable subjectivity, to the reader. Even the best explanation would be far from complete. The splendid thing about the Tree of Life, however, and, indeed, the entire Kabbalah, is that the understanding of it is something that comes gradually from within yourself and is not the product of hard-learned lessons. There is a fine passage in the *Zohar* which, though referring to the Torah, is appropriate in this context. It describes the sacred scriptures as a beautiful maiden who lives alone in a secluded chamber of a great castle. From time to time she appears at the window so that her secret lover waiting outside may catch a glimpse of her. At last she begins to linger at the window enabling him to speak to her, but even then she keeps her face hidden behind a veil and when she replies it is in allegorical language. But one day, just when the lover is despairing of ever getting to know her, she deigns to show her face and reveal to him the secrets hitherto kept within her heart. In this chapter we shall draw closer to the window where the maiden stands waiting.

The first thing to be said about the Tree of Life is that it consists of three triangles and one final sefira called Malkuth situated at the bottom on its own. Although its true source is in heaven, the Tree is, as it were, 'rooted' in Malkuth. It is therefore not surprising that this sefira represents the earth. Here is the womb containing all those things that make up the tree itself, just as there exists within the acorn everything needed to create the mighty oak. In Malkuth lie the forces which are manifest in all the other sefiroth and which, you will recall, are also forces within ourselves. For the sefiroth are above all *forces* rather than things, and for this reason the Tree should be thought of not as a 'map' of ourselves and the world, but as a diagrammatic representation of the invisible and interrelated forces active in both.



The Tree of Life
Figure 1

If we look at the triangles on the Tree we observe that each contains two opposing forces while between them lies a third, the force of consciousness, which serves to balance them. This third force is the

equilibrium so important to the doctrine of opposites. The sefiroth can be further classified by saying that those on the right of the Tree, the Black Pillar or Pillar of Mercy, are male and therefore positive, while those on the left, the Silver Pillar or Pillar of Severity, are female and negative. From this it follows that the sefiroth in the middle, which reconcile the other two, are a combination of both. Because our minds are unable readily to conceive of abstractions like 'force', each sefira has acquired its own mental image or symbolic personification linked to further images and associations. These are simply the forms devised to help us understand and eventually use the cosmic forces they represent.

At the 'top' of the Tree and at the apex of the triangle is the Sphere of Kether. The force behind this sefira is nothing less than the creative power of God, that initial emanation which began the whole process of creation. By this token it is the sefira closest to the *Ein Sof*, the Eternal Infinite, which, though at present inconceivable, we know to be the unmoved Prime Mover of all movement and life.

Within the creative impulse were two principles, one active and the other passive. Male and Female, they have become the twin forces of our universe. The active force Hokmah, on the right of the triangle, is the positive, dynamic energy that lies behind all movement, growth and change. Its opposite, Binah, is the passive principle, stable and unchanging, like the waters of a tranquil sea. We know, however, that once these dark waters are impregnated by the force of Hokmah, they will stir and bring forth life. Thus while Hokmah is the Father of the universe, Binah is the Great Mother, that passive wisdom whose 'ways are those of gentleness and all her paths are peace' (Proverbs iii, 17).

After the universal activity implicit in the first triangle we turn in the second to more homely things. For the sefiroth found here may be described in human terms as a father, mother and child. The first of them, Hesed, is the father, stern yet benevolent, just yet forgiving. His is the power that goes about calmly organising things, ensuring that order emerges from chaos and that justice, peace and love prevail. On the left of the triangle is the opposite force, Geburah, which also represents authority, but this time that of the mother. This is the force that punishes, but does so only where punishment is merited. Even so, the energy of Geburah is essentially destructive, causing havoc, strife and dissent. In this way the actions of Hesed and Geburah complement each other and are observable

in the manifold workings of nature where the established order succumbs to inevitable processes of decay and dissolution. Between the two, however, lies the redemptive sphere of Tifareth, held by tradition to be the sphere of the Sun. Here we discern the urge to survive, the vital energy that impels life to continue regardless of setbacks. It may seldom realize its ambition to hold in perfect balance the forces that flank it, but it nevertheless ensures that progress results from their ceaseless interaction.

In the third triangle the child we encountered in Tifareth has attained adulthood. We are now able to perceive the two principal forces that move it. The first, on the right of the triangle, is the male force, Netsah. Just as the child of Tifareth represented the urge to survive, so the mature Netsah is that same urge realised. For it is the endurance and continuation of Nature. In addition, it contains within itself all those things we think of when we use the word 'natural': it represents the senses and the passions, the world of instinct and primeval desires, our unreasoned reaction to the things that affect us.

As Netsah represents our natural proclivities, so Hod, its opposite, has to do with mental activity that is less dependent on sensory impulses. This is the realm of imagination and fantasy, abstraction and intellect. Whereas in the turmoil of Netsah we see the spontaneous activity of the mind, we behold in the repose of Hod, the mind's own creativeness. Between the two, however, there exists a third force, Yesod, which contains the other two and much of itself besides. For in the mysterious depths of this sefira lie all those characteristics which combine to form our individual personalities.

Finally we return to Malkuth where, as children of the earth, we may stand looking up at the Tree. Its source—its true root—is lost in the light of the eternal, but we need not despair of reaching it. We are a part of it. Indeed, being a composite symbol of the universe, the Tree can help us draw closer to the fountainhead. We can use it too as our guide to the astral world whenever we choose to leave the sphere of Malkuth, for by referring to the pattern of the Tree we may safely go ahead and explore the astral without risk of losing our way.

In some books the figure of a man is superimposed on the Tree of Life, as if to remind us that the microcosm he represents is a replica of the macrocosm. By studying himself, therefore, man can better understand the workings of nature and from this learn something of God and the divine

scheme of things. It is simply a matter of reasoning from the known to the unknown, the visible to the invisible, the human to the divine. The conformity between the part and the whole has another consequence of vital importance to the practice of magic. This is the ancient belief that the one can directly affect the other, both being subject to the same laws, and best summed up by the so called Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus.⁷ First mentioned in Arabic texts of the sixth and seventh centuries, it is reputed to have been inscribed with certain Phoenician characters. According to the Gnostic philosopher Zosimos of Panopolis, this precious relic was acquired by Maria Prophetissa, a first century alchemist often associated, though for no good reason, with Miriam, a sister of Moses. Another account maintains that the tablet was discovered by Abraham's wife, Sarah, in a cave where it was guarded by the corpse of Hermes Trismegistus himself. Someone else rumoured to have been the first to discover it is Alexander the Great. Fortunately, readers familiar with magical literature will not be put out by these disputed—and extremely dubious—claims. They are, sadly, an all-to-common feature of occultism.

As for the message on the tablet itself, the Latin version contains these words: *‘Verum est... quod superius est sicut quod inferius et quod inferius est sicut quod superius, ad perpetrando miracula rei unius.’* ‘The truth is that what is above is like what is below and what is below is like what is above, to accomplish the miracles of the one thing.’ The ‘miracles’ of magic are governed by the same principle, although far from being miraculous, they are merely the results of applying certain natural, albeit occult, laws.

For the magical adept the Kabbalah and the Tree of Life are a useful codification of these laws. However, on no account should the novice magician feel that by studying the Kabbalah he is turning his back on other magical traditions. Magic, like the laws on which it is based, is universal; the language, symbolism and mythology may vary but all those who practise it have recourse to the same fundamental principles. Thus although magic can assume protean forms, they are never more than the outward appearance of a consistent reality, just as the mechanics of speech remain the same for all the wide variety of languages. When a Western adept evokes the negative aspect of Geburah he is in effect summoning the same destructive power as his colleague in Madras who invokes the goddess Kali. The reason why in this chapter we have singled out the

Kabbalah for special attention is that its cosmology seems eminently reasonable, far more so than the several rival theories which compete for our acceptance. In any case, the Kabbalah, while retaining its Jewish character, is itself an amalgam of several magical traditions, including the Greek, Gnostic and Egyptian. For this reason it has become the most widely used magical system in the Western world, not least because of the precedence accorded to it by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, an initiatory organisation founded in the eighteen-eighties, and its successors. But there is nothing to stop you, if you wish to be eclectic, from consulting other traditions from time to time. Only occultists with a vested interest in promoting their own pet system recommend that their followers stick to a particular one. You will find that the rituals given in this book have at least the merit of being a fairly representative bunch.

We implied earlier that the Tree of Life could serve as a guide to the astral world. Traditionally this mysterious realm is divided into two parts, the upper and the lower astral. These expressions should not, however, lead us to think of a particular place situated somewhere beyond the world in which we live. It would be more correct to think of it as a supra-physical world that coexists with our own, albeit functioning on a different wavelength. Because of this it can be said to infiltrate our own world. Thus when we speak of the upper and lower astral we have in mind differences of degree, not distance. It may become easier to grasp if explained in these somewhat simplistic terms: close to the earth the etheric atmosphere has a fairly high degree of density; this is why the astral fabric can be so easily molded to form thought images. However, as we retreat from the world of matter towards another which may be called pure spirit for want of a better expression, the etheric atmosphere becomes progressively more refined until we reach the upper astral. But the refinement is not the result of ether (or anything else) diffusing through space; rather it is, as it were, a slipping over on to a different wavelength. Yet even then these wavelengths, like long, medium and short radio waves, coexist within the same 'space'. The real difficulty in understanding all of this is that our minds have been conditioned to think three-dimensionally. Time, distance and degree are generally conceived of only in spatial terms.

Who or what inhabits the astral world? Well, for a start it is claimed that the etheric bodies of the recently dead sojourn in the lower astral. On the eternal principle of sympathetic attraction these find themselves after death

in the company of people similar to themselves, many of whom may have been friends and relations in their lifetime. Here their own thoughts and those of their predecessors have moulded the ether into landscapes similar to those they knew in life; there are cities, mountains, streams and forests, just as there are on earth. This is why descriptions of the next world received through spiritualist mediums often bear an incredible resemblance to the English countryside on a sunny afternoon. The prevalence of such thought forms is forcibly indicated in Sir Oliver Lodge's famous book *Raymond*,⁸ where the dead hero reports that in the spirit world a fine cigar, even a good drop of scotch, can be had for the wishing. The lesson that emerges from this is that after death our personalities remain very similar to what they were on earth, with the same likes and dislikes, the same weaknesses and limitations. Unfortunately, this does not prevent some of the recently dead from laying claim to deep wisdom and preaching at us when they feel inclined. Many of us have at some time or other encountered those spurious Red Indians who have a fondness for moral platitudes and pidgin English. Most of these séance-room visitors are harmless enough, provided one accepts them for what they are and judges any advice they offer by ordinary common-sense standards. I am afraid it has always been fashionable among occultists to denigrate the spiritualist movement, but such hostility smacks rather of the Turk who could brook no rival near the throne.⁹ What some occultists tend to forget is that many celebrated magicians in the past frequently had recourse to necromancy which, unlike the innocent pleasures of table-turning, often had a sinister purpose behind it. For necromancy was primarily a method of divination and the spirits were summoned not to dispense milk-and-water sentiments but to answer specific questions, often concerning the supposed whereabouts of hidden treasure. The answers obtained in this way were usually as ambiguous as those provided by the Red Hawks and Chu-chin-chows of the modern spiritualist séance. Not that this ever deterred the necromancers: Saul engaged the Witch of Endor to call up the shade of Samuel; Ulysses interrogated the spirit of Tiresias; and the famous Dr Dee, assisted by the mediumistic Edward Kelley, was wont to conjure up the dead in Elizabethan times. Closer to our own period we have Eliphas Lévi's picturesque account of how he persuaded the ghost of Apollonius of Tyana to materialize in nineteenth-century London.¹⁰

One of the difficulties about trying to communicate with the dead is that you risk contacting an astral ‘corpse’. This is the astral shell or husk left behind after the individual behind the personality has vacated it to begin a new incarnation or to continue its spiritual progress in the astral world. For a time these astral corpses retain a fragment of their original personality, and may return nostalgically to earth to haunt places associated with them in life or manifest themselves at séances. The problem here is that it is not always easy to detect the difference between the still-inhabited astral body and the astral corpse. This is why there is little of value, apart from comfort to the bereaved, to be derived from trafficking with the departed. You will find yourself either talking to what is little more than a zombie or to a perfectly ordinary human being—and there are plenty of human beings in this world without having to seek company in the next.

If, however, you are determined to go ahead and try your luck at communicating with the dead there are two easy ways of going about it. Admittedly, the first of these has recently fallen into disrepute, but it remains a good deal safer than sitting alone, as many advocate, with your mind left open to whatever spirit influences care to invade it. The first method is the old-fashioned one that involves spreading bits of paper bearing the letters of the alphabet in a circle and placing an upturned glass or tumbler in the middle. In addition to the letters, the circle should contain the numbers 1 to 10 and two papers, one bearing the word ‘yes’ and the other ‘no’. The glass you use should not be too light or long-stemmed as it may overturn easily or, worse, break. On the other hand, do not select one that is too cumbersome. For this type of séance there should be at least one other sitter besides yourself. There is no need to dim the lights beforehand or have solemn music wafting from a record-player in the corner of the room. Such ‘atmosphere’ may send agreeable shivers down the sitters’ backs, but it could just as easily scare away a nervous spirit. Each sitter should rest a finger lightly on the glass which may then move across the table, apparently of its own volition, until it touches one of the letters. If you wish, and if it does not make you feel too foolish, you may begin the proceedings by asking aloud, ‘Is there anybody there?’ The glass should then either stand still, in which case there is no one present, or else glide smoothly to ‘yes’. If it glides to ‘no’ there is clearly something wrong somewhere. Once communication has been established you may continue to ask your questions and the glass will, it is hoped, provide you with

suitable answers. Do try, however, not to ask silly questions of the sort that reduce the enterprise to the level of a silly parlour game. If there is a genuine intelligence impelling the glass to move beneath your fingers, then he or she is entitled to the same respect you would afford any living human being. If the glass moves only in an erratic fashion you may be in contact with an astral corpse or at best an illiterate personality. There is then no point in carrying on and it is time for all concerned to break contact by taking their fingers off the glass and having a chat, a drink or a cigarette before trying again.

If you do start getting messages, try from the beginning to ascertain the name of the communicating entity. Do not be fobbed off with some commonplace Christian name like John, but insist on the full name. If possible, seek to discover when and where the character lived so that you can check whether such a person ever existed. But be very wary if offered a well-known identity like, say, Cleopatra: the Serpent of the Nile is unlikely to drop in for a gossip with your little circle. Be equally wary of quick results that seem too good to be true; the chances are they are just this, and that one of the sitters is pushing the glass. A wise precaution against this sort of thing is not to arrange the letters of the circle in alphabetical order, but to jumble them up. It may not deter the joker, but it will at least make his job more difficult.

Another quite harmless spiritualistic diversion, which can turn out to be as revealing about your own subconscious as it is about conditions in the next world, is automatic writing. For this you can use the traditional ouija board or a contraption known as a planchette. The latter is a small platform which is mounted on rollers and has a pencil stuck through its centre. The theory is that if you rest your fingers on the platform, spirit forces will consent to move it, enabling the pencil to write out messages. a simpler way of achieving the same result is to hold an ordinary pencil in your hand, its tip resting on a sheet of paper, and then wait until your hand starts moving of its own accord. To keep you occupied in the meantime you should run through the multiplication tables or recite whatever bits of poetry you remember. Any writing that appears in the first few attempts will probably consist only of meaningless combinations of letters and indecipherable squiggles. But it may encourage you to persevere if you bear in mind that some people have produced full-length novels through automatic writing, albeit of no conspicuous literary merit. It is even

claimed that Dickens, Kipling and Shakespeare are even now controlling the ballpoints of several suburban psychics.

On the whole, you would be well advised to avoid promiscuous psychic dabbling and leave the dead where they are. All that can be said in favour of communicating with them is that it fosters a matter-of-fact acceptance of the astral world that is more desirable than the sort of holy awe encouraged within some occult circles. Of course the magician should never join the fools in rushing into yet uncharted regions, but he need not hold himself back. After all, the angels themselves do not fear to tread the astral; it is their natural environment. Moreover, it stands to reason that if we are to work with this plane of existence we must learn from the start to accept it as something as real in its own terms as the physical world we currently inhabit. This does not mean we can afford to shirk the task of finding out all we can about the astral world before venturing into it. With knowledge we shall be able to greet its inhabitants not as strangers but as friends.

We have already observed that the human mind is forever creating thought images on the astral planes. Most of these lose their identity quite rapidly by dissolving into a general pattern which is the sympathetic aspect of a cosmic force. These patterns, together with other archetypal images, are among the thought forms most commonly encountered in the lower astral where they have the appearance of independent life. In reality, however, they draw what life they have from those aspects of the universal mind most closely resembling themselves. Even so, for all practical purposes it is best to overlook the mechanics and treat all thought forms as if they are intrinsically real. Indeed, as many have been created by the pictorial imagination of whole racial and religious groups, they may be said to have acquired a quasi-reality of their own. Other forms, however, are merely the symbolic appearance that astral forces may temporarily assume so that we may recognize them. As forces, of course, they existed long before any symbolic identification was attached to them. This is so in the case of those great sefirotic forces on the Tree of Life. Of these each one is associated with a mental image, and in perceiving that image we contact the force of which it is the expression. Thus the traditional classification of the images allows us to understand better the phenomena we shall encounter when we start practising magic.

Most common of the forces active in the lower astral are the elemental powers. These are synthetic thought forms generated by every series of automatic reactions at work throughout the universe. According to occultists an ‘angelic’ intelligence is usually responsible for the initial reaction, but this withdraws once it has set things in motion. Thereafter subsequent reactions gradually build up an elemental consciousness of their own. Sometimes these natural processes form a localized unit like a particular valley, wood or mountain and then generate a kind of elemental oversoul. Such is the origin of those nature spirits the ancients venerated and are today known as *devas* or shining ones, though the term—“deity” in Sanskrit—has a different meaning in Hindu and Buddhist speculation. Many types of elemental exist, but the most familiar categorization involves the four primary elements of earth, air, fire and water. In alchemy the elementals belonging to each of these groups were known respectively as gnomes, sylphs, salamanders and undines, although these names were never meant to be taken too literally. Kabbalists maintain that each group is ruled by one of the four archangels, Uriel (earth), Raphael (air), Michael (fire) and Gabriel (water). There is no doubt that in the past, magicians, like most of their contemporaries, believed that only these four basic elements existed, but although science has now rejected a simplistic fourfold classification, it remains a convenient one nevertheless. Modern occultists often attempt to justify its retention by arguing that it represents four types of molecular activity prevalent throughout the multiplicity of physical elements, though physicists might well disagree.

The elementals provide much of the energy on which we shall be drawing in order to effect our magic. In reality elementals are streams of life, although parts of each stream may occasionally appear to detach themselves and enjoy a temporary independence. This ability will be useful to us when we are negotiating with them, but we ought always to bear in mind that their independence is illusory. Nor should the word ‘negotiate’ be taken to mean that we shall ever start bargaining with elementals. To do so would be to imply that they are our equals; whereas in fact they are below us on the scale of spiritual evolution. Any intelligence they possess is dedicated solely to the achievement of whatever purpose lies behind the activity they represent, be it destruction or preservation, chaos or harmony. It is this single-mindedness that provides them with their strength. From it flow vast currents of cosmic

energy which, given the right conditions, can be used to accomplish the seemingly impossible. Yet at the same time this is also their weakness, for they rush inexorably and with blinkered vision towards a destination not of their choosing. Nevertheless, we should not despise them when all they are doing is being true to their nature. Nor should we ever consider making them our slaves, for to do so would be to challenge the authority of the archangels, known in the East as Dhyanis, who direct their activity. There is a traditional belief that because they are but creations of the created, elementals eventually cease to exist. As they develop they gradually sense their doom, and so look upon us to teach them how to acquire immortality. By coming into contact with human beings whose own posthumous survival, you will recall, is due to an ability to think conceptually, they hope to learn how likewise to think for themselves and so establish an identity divorced from the relentless activity to which they are condemned. In return for this lesson the grateful elemental will perform favours for the adept who has helped it to master its destiny.

Apart from elementals and their archangelic rulers, there are other astral beings which manifest themselves in nature. In the Hebrew tradition these are often depicted as angels, held to be among the first creatures created by God, whom they serve as agents or messengers. Elsewhere they appear as *deva* kings (the *Dhyan Chohans* of Theosophy) or as pagan deities, while to most of us they are familiar as the gods and goddesses of antiquity. It is useful to study classical or pagan mythology with this in mind, since the deities in their pantheon, like the spheres of the Tree of Life, are easily identifiable with facets of our personality and the forces at work around us. These, however, are all exalted beings who are rarely contacted directly. Thus when we summon a particular god or archangel, we do not expect that he himself will deign to appear, but that we shall somehow feel the power that flows from him. In occult parlance we are ‘attuning ourselves to his ray’.

Our social survey of the magical world has shown us that its denizens range from the great angelic aristocracy who move the planets to those minute sparks of consciousness deep within every sub-atomic wave/particle. What occult tradition has done is ascribe to some of these a formal identity by which we come into psychic contact with the force they represent. Some may appear to us as sylphs or dryads, some as human beings, others as animals. At first this diversity may seem confusing, but a

system of reference like the Tree of Life, and more specifically the correspondences associated with it, provide us with a code by which they may be identified.

By way of example, simplistic though it is, let us imagine we are on an astral journey and, with the Tree as our guide, intend visiting the region of Tifareth. As we proceed along one of the thirty-two paths we are suddenly confronted by two snakes, and this at once tells us we have not yet reached our destination, for twin serpents are creatures of the neighbouring sefira, Hod. Our location will be confirmed if at the same time we observe a palm tree nearby, for this belongs to the planet Mercury in whose sphere Hod lies. If later on our journey we find ourselves passing a horse, we know we have wandered into the region of Geburah and shall have to retrace our steps to Hod. Thence we shall set off again along the twenty-sixth path that leads to Tifareth, where we can expect to see a golden landscape and, possibly, children playing among sunflowers. There will, of course, be other things to see, but small pointers like these can be relied upon to guide the wise traveller. The magician is no astral vagrant. He knows where he wishes to go and where to seek the sign-posts that will get him there safely. A table of these correspondences is given on pp. 136, and you might do well to familiarize yourself with it, since you are unlikely to have a copy of this book at hand when flitting off towards the astral planes.

Up to now our picture of these planes has been, apart perhaps from the snakes, all sweetness and light. Much of the region is indeed pleasant—no one in his right mind would wish to have dealings with a dusty underworld peopled with chain-rattling corpses. Yet we saw earlier how all natural synthesis depends upon an opposition of positive and negative factors. Both are encountered in the physical world and both exist in the astral as well. We shall have to learn therefore how to cope with both forces and to this end it is important that we first reconcile them in our own personality. The negative forces in the astral world originate in the primeval energy which was discharged throughout the cosmos before equilibrium had been established. Since then these forces have been clothed in forms conceived and nourished by the vicious thoughts of people here on earth.

In magic, as so often in life, evil can be described as the product of excess. Once one of two opposing forces becomes the stronger, thereby creating tension, a dangerous unbalance ensues and that force is then said by Kabbalists to be klippothic.^{[11](#)} The magical adept does not ignore such

forces, but tries to come to terms with them in order to accommodate them within his understanding. He knows that when he evokes an astral force he must be prepared to reconcile its conflicting aspects, for before manifestation can take place the one must divide itself into two complementary factors of action and reaction. Deliberately to concentrate on only one of these would be to evoke the klippothic or unbalanced aspect of the force evoked, and this might have unwelcome consequences. Sadly, there will always be some for whom only the klippothic holds any attraction and who will dedicate their rituals to the pursuit of it.

This leads us to the vexed question of white and black magic. Like most categorization, such a neat division of magic into good and bad is too facile. After all, what some people judge to be good may seem evil in the eyes of others. As always, the difficulty lies in establishing objective criteria. Here the reader must be left to decide his own moral standards, although he would do well to remember that while he may use magic to pursue his own happiness, he must take care not to interfere with the happiness of others. To that extent it is the ritual intention which may be said to determine the colour of one's magic, and any ritual designed to cause harm is generally called black. Many occultists also label magic black or white according to the ingredients of the ritual: rituals that demand the spilling of blood, or involve sex, for example, are usually considered to be black.

This horror of sex is curious, and such prudishness inconsistent with the complete acceptance of life which should be the goal of every magician. Sexual enjoyment has always been a part of magic, and if readers wish to go cavorting down the primrose path it would be presumptuous of this book to attempt to dissuade them; provided it does not disturb the astral fauna, what they get up to on the mossy banks is their own business. The trouble starts, however, when rituals based on sex and blood become an excuse for cruelty. Sadism in whatever guise is an ugly thing, and rites that pander to it are not only squalid but perilous too, for by a remorseless occult law all evil ultimately rebounds upon the head of the evil-doer. In one short lifetime a magician might incur a karmic debt that would take many lifetimes to discharge. Indeed, even in this life sooner or later a price is exacted: there is nothing more frightening than the occultist who has slept through the *nox daemonica* and never dares sleep again. Remember

this and you will be unlikely to come to any harm in your dealings with the astral world and its sundry inhabitants.

¹ The theologising that follows will not appeal to everyone. It is intended to provide us with a working hypothesis, no more. As such it need not be taken too seriously by those disposed to work things out for themselves.

² The chief books of the Kabbalists are the *Sefer Yetzirah*, or Book of Creation, which is thought to date from the 6th century, and the *Sefer Hazzohar* (known as the Zohar), or Book of Brightness, which appeared in the 13th century. There is some controversy over the authorship of the Zohar: some authorities say that it dates from the 2nd century when it may have been written by a mystic called Simeon ben Yochai, while others attribute it to its discoverer, Moses de Leon. Another important work is the *Sefer HaBahir*, or Book of Bahir, which was probably written in the 6th century by Isaac the Blind. Supporters of the Kabbalah insist, however, that it can be nothing less than divinely inspired. In the Book of Enoch the arcane wisdom is said to have been betrayed to mankind by the fallen angels, but a Talmudic tradition claims that God whispered it to Moses on Mount Sinai. According to this tradition its secrets were then imparted to seventy elders who thereafter transmitted them orally to their successors.

³ Three main cryptogrammatic methods were employed: (1) *Gematria*, this involved converting the letters of the Hebrew alphabet into their numerical equivalents and substituting another word of the same numerical total. In this way the words 'And lo three men' (Gen. xviii 2) could be reconstructed to read, 'These were Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.' The alignment of God, the Creator, with primordial man can also be justified by gematria since the numerical total value of God's name (YHVH) is the same as that of man (Adam). Kabbalistic scholars were greatly helped in their experiments by the fact that Hebrew used no vowels. (2) *Notarikon*: this was a method of forming sentences by taking every letter of a given word as the initial letter of another. Alternatively, the first or the final letter of each word in a particular sentence could be used to form a new word. Angelic names and divine appellations were usually 'discovered' in this way. (3) *Temurah*, was even more complicated than the previous methods and involved combinations (*tserouf*) of different letters as a means of deciphering the divine messages thought to be buried within the sacred texts.

⁴ In his *De Vita Contemplativa* Philo of Alexandria speaks of the Torah as a living being whose body is the literal text of the Pentateuch and whose soul is the occult meaning that underlies the written word. In Isma'ilism a discipline known as *batiniyya* seeks to wrest an inner meaning from the Koran by techniques not unlike those favoured by Kabbalists. Similar claims are made about the Hindu Vedas which are said to possess not only a literal meaning but another discernible in their metre and intonation (*swara*).

⁵ There exist English translations of both the *Sefer Yetzirah* and *Sefer Habahir* (1979) by Aryeh Kaplan, while those who read German will find the *Sefer-HaBahir*, together with other Kabbalistic literature, in Gershom Scholem's *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der jüdischen Mystik*. Scholem's writings on the Kabbalah, most of them translated into English, are well worth reading—and, given the complexity of the subject, commendably readable.

⁶ Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic*, tr. Waite (Rider, London, new ed., 1968, p. 19).

⁷ Traditionally identified with both the Greek god, Hermes, and the Egyptian god Tehuti, who went about giving names to all created things, Hermes Trismegistus is sometimes identified also with the first man so the name is often regarded as an alias of Adam. (See on these points C. J. Jung, *Collected Works*, vol. XII, *Psychology and Alchemy* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1953), pp. 349-50.) In his book *Alchemy Rediscovered and Restored* (Rider, London, 1940), the 20th Century

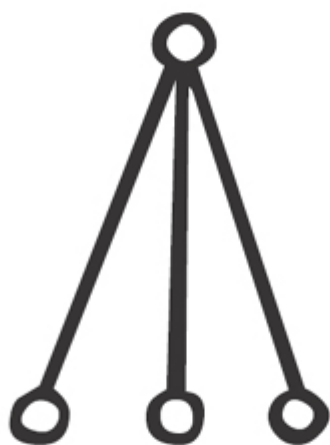
alchemist, Archibald Cockren, draws attention to an old tradition which places Hermes Trismegistus in the Egypt of Sesostris II, a pharaoh of the 12th Dynasty (c. 1900-1736 B.C.).

[8](#) *Raymond or Life after Death* (Methuen, London, 1916). This book caused a sensation when it appeared, marking as it did the conversion of a world-famous scientist to spiritualism.

[9](#) Aleister Crowley's attacks on the spiritualists were, as might be expected, extremely virulent. In his *Magick in Theory and Practice* he describes their putrescent auras, morbid natures and filthy minds, warning readers that contact with such creatures is more deadly than syphilis. By contrast his contemporary, the much revered Dion Fortune, went around London demonstrating clairvoyance at the city's more fashionable Spiritualist churches on Sunday nights during World War II.

[10](#) E. Levi, op. cit.

[11](#) The klippoth—plural form of the Hebrew word klippah, meaning shell or husk—are held by some authorities to be the the impaired remnants of a universe preceding our own, a kind of cosmic debris attached to the Tree of Life like decaying pieces of bark. For others, notably, the revered Kabbalist Isaac Luria (1534-1572), author of *Etz Chaiim* (Tree of Life), they were the shards that dropped into the nether world after seven of the original sefiroth were shattered by the first infusion of divine light. A third opinion, influenced perhaps by Neoplatonism, maintains that after the initial burst of creative energy from within the godhead, the divine essence gradually diminished as it traversed each sefira in turn, the klippoth being a product of the instability that prevailed at the moment of its extinction.



THE WORLD AND THE MAGICIAN

As the reader may by now have realised, the first thing any aspiring occultist must do is cultivate an awareness of the magical universe and of his part in it. This does not mean we need shut ourselves off from the world about us or shun its myriad pleasures. On the contrary, interest in our surroundings will grow as we learn to recognize in them the working of those same forces that also move us. To open our eyes to this new way of looking at things, a brief salutation can be made three times a day to the Sun. By doing so we are acknowledging the vibrant life force that pervades the universe and is symbolically recharged by the daily presence of the Sun. It is a useful habit, for it not only reminds us of the non-corporeal aspect of life, all too easily forgotten in the hurly-burly of everyday experience, but also trains us to become intuitively aware of the passage of time, so that eventually we can measure it without recourse to clocks and watches. This ability is useful—perhaps essential—when we are engaged in a magical operation or embark on a journey through the astral planes. That said, the main purpose of our salutation remains a quasi-devotional one.

Each morning the novice magician should make what some occultists call the ‘matutinal invocation’. This sounds very impressive, as indeed it is meant to, but really is no more than a simple, often spontaneous, prayer. (Those averse to the notion of prayer may regard it as acknowledgement of that universal Oneness we considered earlier.) To perform it you should look towards the rising Sun, but if that is impractical, you can get away with just turning to face the east. Now imagine the Sun pumping warm new life through the veins of the universe, as well as through yourself. Picture its having done this since the formation of our planet and try in the space of a second to recapture that entire past. Choose from it, if you wish, a time and place with which to link your thoughts. Let it be a Celtic Sun you see, spilling golden over a soft green landscape, or an Egyptian Sun, the mighty Khepri-Ra who beholds his reflection in the limpid waters of the Nile.

The second invocation is made at noon each day, when again you should try through concentration to lose your present self in the splendour of the

light. Now, when the Sun is at its peak, is the moment to steal a little of its power and draw it deep within your secret self.

The evening salutation should ideally be made while watching the Sun set. However, you may, if you prefer, choose any time in the evening that suits you, though in this case it is advisable that you stick to the same time each day. Again you must turn towards the Sun and use your imagination to heighten the experience. You might, for example, be watching a sunset from the Parthenon in Athens, or else project yourself to some bleak cliff top and gaze upon a splendid Nordic Sun as it sinks into the sea.

What you actually say on these occasions is less important than what you feel. However there will be times when, perhaps due to weariness or worry, you find it difficult to achieve the spiritual expansion which should accompany each salutation. The right words, spoken or unspoken, may then fail to spring up from within you and your thoughts will keep wandering back to mundane things. But do not lose heart, should this happen. Even magicians have their off days.

There remains one caveat concerning the salutations. Because his mind is attuned to non-material modes of existence, the magician is liable to attract influences which he has not consciously summoned. That is why, although he trains his mind to be as receptive as possible, he endeavours always to keep it under control, allowing the astral world to intrude only when he wills it, and even then shutting out unwelcome visitors. The last great blessing of the salutations is that they are a means of ensuring that only benefic influences surround you throughout the day as you go about your business in the world of men.

This constant awareness of the magical universe which every magician must cultivate is designed to bring home to us the fundamental unity of existence, seen and unseen alike. This was the great secret of the mystery schools at Eleusis and Alexandria. As you begin your search for it, you will gradually become aware that your conscious mind is only part of a marvelous realm which embraces both the personal subconscious and that part of you which is at one with the whole of creation. It often happens that the novice magician begins to feel as if he is developing a magical persona quite distinct from his everyday identity. Certain occult books encourage this belief and on occasion offer rituals designed to introduce him to his new-found magical self.^{[1](#)}

At this stage, however, rather than confront an *alter ego* you will primarily be enhancing your own self-awareness and, in the process, acknowledging new ideas, many of them retrieved from the treasure house of your unconscious. Jung described this process as 'individuation' and far from being the emergence of a new personality, it is, in alchemical terms, but the transmutation of the old. If, therefore, you find that your trivial worries seem to disappear when you turn your mind from mundane things to magic, do not start thinking that a more philosophical self has temporarily taken charge of you. The personality which rejoices in the wonderful unity of the cosmic scheme is no different from that which at other times frets over the household bills. The difference lies in the things that occupy its attention. Be assured that in time the process of individuation within your psyche will reconcile all aspects of your personality (the totality of being) so that you learn to regard even the household bills with philosophical detachment.

Those occultists who argue the existence of a secondary magical personality are often reluctant to accept that our everyday self is worthy of magic. The profound experiences arising from magical practice seem to them evidence of a superior personality which, like one's Sunday best, is kept in reserve for special occasions. Apart from the risk it brings of dissociative personality disorder, this attitude is wrong because it removes magic from the context of everyday experience, turning it into something which, like private vice, should be indulged in once in a while and only on the quiet.

When, sooner or later, you become aware of the unity underlying the cosmos you will be able to appreciate that your magical work is capable of universal significance. This is because nothing acts independently in nature, but is subject to a general law of causation, one more subtle and encompassing than hitherto imagined. Ours is a *participative* universe, something hermetic tradition has always maintained but only recently—and at first reluctantly—been conceded by science. In the past reality was held to consist only of things accessible through empirical experience, all objectively real and separable. If these affected one another, it was by physical means or forces, none of which could ever travel faster than the speed of light. By now quantum physics has shown this not to be the case. Among its discoveries, the most startling has been evidence that at the subatomic level events are determined by the individual observing them. In

other words, objective reality exists, not of itself—or at least not only of itself—but because we are aware of it. (One is reminded of the often mocked 18th Century divine George Berkeley who maintained that nothing was independent of our perceiving it, famously summed up by the maxim *esse est percipi*.) What contemporary physics proposes is a reality which, if not created by the observer, is certainly shaped and conditioned by his observation, its parts subject to an inter-connectedness beyond any arising from themselves. Here, though few scientists would admit it, is the *raison d'être* of magical practice, which as Aleister Crowley famously said, is “the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with the will.” The very nature of reality, science now concedes, permits this to happen.

The interdependence has also moral consequences we need briefly to consider, for if everything is subject to it, our actions are equally susceptible to its pervasive influence. Both scientist and occultist regard man as a constituent part of the material world, inextricably bound up with the processes that govern it. Such determinism is inherent in the concept of universal law, as well as implicit in the view of man as a physical organism equipped with five senses. Because we rely on information provided by those senses, our motivation can be said largely to depend on whatever stimuli affect them. But that is not all, for the union of mind and body means also that physiological considerations, over which man has little or no control, play their part in deciding his behaviour. In the end his actions may owe more to his cerebral structure or glandular secretions than to what he fondly thinks is a rational evaluation of rival possibilities. When we take into account the known influence of heredity and environment, we see that man is subject to an *intrinsic* determinism which, in accordance with sound esoteric principles, is simply a reflection of the pan-determinism around him. When we add to this the astrological belief in planetary influences we are clearly well on the way to reducing man to a puppet bereft of free will.

The problem has taxed the minds of all the great moral philosophers. We must go back to the Epicureans to find a solution consistent with what we know of nature from modern science. Epicurus, with commendable prescience, believed that every object was composed of infinitesimal atoms which were in motion all the time. Realizing, however, that if these atoms all moved along an ordained path, then human atoms must be

equally determined and predictable, he was careful to declare that atoms could on occasion swerve from the track ordained for them by nature.² True, those that deviated in this way were exceptions and did nothing to upset the general rule. Yet their very existence was enough to show that the fate of an atom might sometimes depend on its own nature (one is tempted to say inclination) rather than on factors outside itself. As noted earlier, what was no more than a useful theory for the Epicureans has been confirmed by physicists who discovered that the behaviour of subatomic particles is never predictable, being to some extent dependent on us. Ultimately it is we that determine whether Schrödinger's long-suffering cat is alive or dead!

What is natural to microparticles may—or, rather, must—be natural also to us, so that in our physiological make-up there already exists a potential independence from forces outside us. This is borne out by observation, for we know that human conduct, like that of subatomic particles, can never be predicted exactly. Even when we think we know all there is to know about a person's character or the circumstances affecting him, there remains an incalculable element. It is always possible that the reason for it has hitherto escaped our notice, but it may also be that although nourished by sense impressions received from outside, man's conceptual faculty, his reason, enables him to correlate these in a highly personal way. Thus determinism by external causes is transformed into a sort of self-imposed determinism over which reason presides, reflecting on sense impressions and arranging them in its own peculiar order. Determinism is not evaded, since the material for reflection is provided by external causes and by information stored in the memory, but the mind's own contribution means that man collaborates in his own destiny.

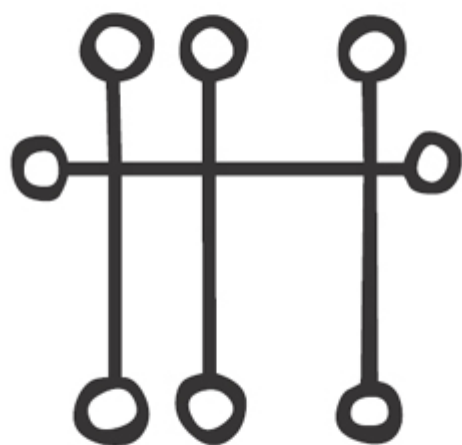
The occultist would not stop here, but would extend the collaboration to that greater destiny which arises from the processes of cause and effect at work throughout the universe, these being the practical bases of magic. Recognition of a cosmic necessity does not mean the poor occultist feels weighed down under the yoke of blind determinism. On the contrary he is able to lend his conscious assent to the dynamic scheme of things and, thanks to his knowledge of ritual, is privileged to participate in it.

It is this participation we set out to achieve when we perform our thrice-daily salutation to the sun. This short ritual is the ideal means of relating ourselves to the universe we occupy and better understanding how it

functions. It enables us to appreciate our place in the cosmic scheme intuitively—which, of course, is far less painful than a philosophical tussle with an issue like determinism. You may find that at first it is extremely difficult to retain a clear picture of the Greek, Celtic or whatever other type of sun you have chosen to visualize. But the technique of visualization is something you will gradually master, and indeed must master if you are to make any progress. For in magical operations the ability to think constructively is more than an exercise in mental discipline; it is our means of affecting the etheric atmosphere. It enables us to build our own thought forms, contact those already in existence and channel the elemental energy we need down on to the physical plane. In the next chapter we shall see how this is done.

¹ The Higher Self is commonly, though not universally, regarded as a higher state of consciousness which magical practice allows us to discover—or, rather, ‘rediscover’—as it is a faculty we are born with but lose as the routine business of living takes precedence. Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of early Childhood* describes the phenomenon. It is also associated with what some magicians, notably those linked to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (see ‘Mathers’ in [Appendix 3](#)) call one's ‘Holy Guardian Angel’, a term borrowed from the *Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* (c 1450). Getting to know one's Guardian Angel—W. B. Yeats, copying Plato, preferred the word ‘daimon’—was the aim of a ritual described by ‘Abramelin’ and famously performed by Aleister Crowley, (unsuccessfully but with terrifying consequences) in Scotland at the beginning of the last century. Other writers have compared experience of the Higher Self to what in Buddhism is termed *samadhi*, a state of consciousness where subject and object are experienced as one, the precursor to ultimate enlightenment and the liberation (*moksha*) it brings with it.

² see Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, ii, 216-293.



VISUALIZATION AND THE TRAINING OF A MAGICIAN

The simplest way of explaining what visualization involves in magic is to say that it is first and foremost a pictorial rather than verbal way of thinking. It is reported that children think in such terms, forming what psychologists call eidetic images in their mind. What the occultist must do is recapture this ability, one natural to him until the shades of the prison house, as Wordsworth called the onset of adulthood, dimmed his imagination. But thought-building does not stop here, for in magic our mind must be trained to create images that seem real not only in visual terms, but in terms of all the other senses as well. Thus an imagined sprig of lavender must both 'look' and 'smell' real. Likewise if, when you have sufficient experience, you decide to visualize a seashore, you must be able to 'hear' the waves beating on it, 'smell' the briny air, 'feel' the cool spray on your face, and 'taste' the tang of salt around your lips. However, unless you are gifted with an uncommonly vivid imagination, this ability is one that can be acquired only through strenuous and occasionally wearisome practice. We in the West have always been inclined to shirk mental discipline, preferring to leave that sort of thing to the contemplative Orient where meditation is an integral part of daily life and a means to that mystical enlightenment attained by the Buddha. The regular performance of the daily salutations will go some way to training your mind, but other exercises are necessary to complete the process.

When you decide to start your mental training you must set aside a few minutes each day for visualization practice. Fifteen minutes is quite long enough, and as little as five will do. It is far better to keep up five minutes each day than have much longer, but irregular, sessions. The morning has always been regarded as the best time for meditation, allegedly because the earth currents (whatever they may be) are waxing until noon and are on the wane between then and midnight.¹ If you can, use some quiet space where you can meditate without being exposed to distracting influences. Make yourself as comfortable as possible. Some occultists can flop happily into a spectacular yogic *asana*, the well-known lotus posture being one of their favourites, but unless your limbs are extraordinarily supple, you would be well advised to content yourself with sitting down normally. Choose a

straight-backed armchair and rest your elbows on its arms, in the position in which Egyptian pharaohs are sometimes depicted. It is often recommended that one sit with hands clasped and feet crossed, in order, it is said, to keep the body circuit closed and so prevent any wastage of psychic energy. There is no harm in trying it if you want to.

Having settled in your chair you must now endeavour to liberate your body from all muscular and nervous tension. To do this some experts suggest a technique called Moon Breathing which involves breathing through the left nostril, using your thumb to keep the right nostril closed, while repeating the mantric sound 'Aum'. A more down-to-earth method is to start deliberately relaxing every muscle in your body from the tips of your toes to the top of your head. If with the best will in the world you still cannot relax, lie flat on the floor and try there. At the same time close your eyes and picture yourself floating in a dark and silent void. After a few minutes like this, provided you have not dropped off to sleep in the meantime, you should be able to return to your chair and resume the relaxation process with fresh courage. When at last you do feel completely relaxed, avoid the temptation to daydream. Instead, will your brain and body to adopt a state of acuity. On the first few occasions this may cause you to tense up once more, in which case you must start again from the beginning. A wise precaution against this is to breathe very slowly and deeply while you are trying to relax, and then accelerate your breathing once you wish to effect the transition to a state of alertness. The quicker rhythm, while preserving your body from renewed tension, should induce the mental alertness you seek. At no time in your magical training, however, should you alter your breathing habits too drastically, since the increased oxygenisation of your blood, though beneficial in the long run, can also have some alarming side effects if it occurs too suddenly.

The next step is to get down to image-building proper. Start by studying a simple two-dimensional diagram, and then with eyes closed form a mental reproduction of it. Do not be afraid to open your eyes to check the real thing against any portion of your mental picture that may be insufficiently clear, and keep on checking until the diagram held in your mind corresponds exactly with that drawn on the sheet of paper. Once you are able to perform this type of exercise without difficulty you are ready to graduate to three-dimensional objects. Again your aim should be to form a mental picture precisely like the original. You may find that it helps at first

if you project your image of the object on to an imaginary lighted screen inside your mind. A variation of the exercise, which will test your powers of memory, is to look for a minute or so at small objects arranged at random on a tray and then with eyes closed give a detailed description of each. You may recall that this was the game described by Rudyard Kipling in his novel *Kim*. Another fascinating challenge, once you have become fairly expert at visualization, is mentally to examine the object visualized from several different points of view. Let us suppose you have visualized an empty matchbox. Your mind's eye sees the box exactly as it earlier presented itself to your physical eye. Now visualize the same matchbox from various other angles—above, below, etc. Whatever the viewpoint, the matchbox should be as clear and detailed as the original mental ‘photograph’, which in turn should be as clear and detailed as the matchbox that was physically observed. From here some people are able to go one step further and actually transfer their consciousness to inside the matchbox, or visualize it from all points of view at the same time. If this proves to be beyond you at this stage, a slightly easier exercise is to project your consciousness to different parts of the room you are in, so that you get a completely different view from the one presented to your physical vision. You could possibly try this experiment next time you find yourself at a dull party or lecture. It may even help pass the time on a tedious journey, provided, of course, you are not in the driving seat.

In view of its importance in magic, colour must be visualized with special ease, and this too requires practice. Start by visualizing one of the primary colours, say red. For the purpose of this exercise do not visualize neat little rows of red pillar boxes or tins of red paint, simply flood your mind with the colour itself. When your mind is a sea of red, allow the colour to change slowly to orange. Again do not visualize orange *objects*, but the colour itself. When you have filled your mind with orange, let that colour change to yellow, then yellow to green, green to blue and so on. The absence of forms to visualize makes this one of the more difficult exercises to master.

There still remains the task of involving the other senses in your thought-building. Fortunately, some of the visualization exercises can be adapted for this purpose. Smell and taste, for example, may be reproduced by visualizing suitable images—a good hot curry is an excellent one to start with. You can then go on to develop the sense of touch by imagining

yourself soaking up the warm sunshine on a Mediterranean beach. As for hearing, a useful way to begin is to strike a tuning fork and then continue the note in your mind for as long as possible. From here you can progress to more ambitious things.

Up to now your image-building will have been entirely subjective, and as such scarcely differs from the type of concentration taught in many schools of meditation. The secret of magical visualization, however, is that the chosen image is not just locked away inside the mind, but is 'projected' into the real world. This 'projection' is a knack which, like learning to swim or ride a bicycle, will be acquired all of a sudden, but you should not attempt it until you have perfected subjective visualization.

When you are ready, open your eyes while still retaining your mental picture in all its detail. Eventually you will discover that because of a subtle collusion between your mind and your vision, you are able to 'see' the mental picture just as if it were a part of your physical surroundings. One thing to guard against, however, especially in the first flush of success, is the tendency for such mental images to impose themselves on your everyday vision without your willing them to do so. Resist this firmly. Throughout your magical training you should allow things to happen only when you wish them to. Involuntary hallucinations belong to the realm of mental illness, not magic.

By the time you can objectify mental images of such clarity that they appear to possess an empirical reality of their own, you will be well advanced on the way to magical attainment. Exercises are always a chore, but in this case they are very necessary if you are later to derive any benefit from your magical operations. Of course, magic would scarcely be magic if it did not provide some little assistance to lighten the burden. What it offers, however, is not a short cut but merely a crutch to help you along what can, at times, seem an arduous path.

A great deal of help can be obtained by performing a short and simple procedure known as the Kabbalistic Cross, part of something called the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram, a ritual favoured—and largely fashioned—by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. This has nothing at all to do with the cross of Calvary or the Christian devotion known as the sign of the cross. The glyph of the cross is much older than Christianity and was held sacred by ancient civilizations as far apart as Egypt and Mexico, where it was revered as a symbol of, among other deities, Tlaloc, the god of rain, and Quetzalcoatl, lord of the four winds. In Scandinavia, too, long before the birth of Christ, a cross was used to mark the burial places of dead kings and heroes. Indeed, its adoption as a symbol by the Christian church occurred quite late in our era. Before then the monogram ✠ had been favoured.

To make the Kabbalistic cross, stand upright and visualize a splendid cloud of light above your head. This is the ketheric light that crowns the Tree of Glory against which you can, if you like, imagine yourself to be standing. Now, raise your right hand to touch the light and drawing some of it down towards you, place your middle finger on your forehead and say the word ‘Ateh’. With the light still cascading upon you, move your finger to your solar plexus and say ‘Malkuth’. As you do so, picture more light surging up from the earth beneath you so that a band of light now extends from your head to your feet. Next, touch your right shoulder and say ‘Ve Geburah’ and then, with your finger still trailing a stream of white light, touch your left shoulder and say ‘Ve Gedulah’. The form of the cross is now complete, and folding your hands you may speak the final words which are ‘Le Olahm, Am-en’. It is not absolutely essential to use these Hebrew expressions rather than their English equivalent, but constant usage has endowed them with a special efficacy, much of it due to the acoustic vibrations that occur when they are spoken aloud.² The effect of such vibrations is discussed in [Chapter 5](#). What the words themselves mean is: Unto Thee (Ateh), The Kingdom (Malkuth), And the Power (Ve Geburah), And the Glory (Ve Gedulah) Unto all the Ages (Le Olahm), Amen.

While your hands are still clasped in an attitude of prayer, imagine the four branches of the visualized cross stretching outwards through space, and yourself growing with them to a tremendous size. If it makes things easier, shut your eyes and imagine that you are poised above the universe

with the stars at your feet. A few seconds of this vertiginous contemplation will be enough and you should gently let your body contract to its normal physical dimensions. We shall be using the Kabbalistic cross as a preliminary to several magical operations, so it is as well to learn how to do it properly. It should never become a formalistic touching of head, chest and shoulders accompanied by the appropriate words.

The astral light which you channel into your body when making the cross will assist you greatly in your visualization exercises. It will also help if you imagine, while still surrounded or rather transfused by the ketheric radiance, that you hold in your right hand a gleaming sword pointing upwards. This is the Sword of Power, your Excalibur, and it is your symbolic defence against evil and aggression. Now stretch the sword out horizontally and draw a circle all around you. As you do so, imagine a jet of gold and silver fire emanating from the tip, so that by turning full circle you have in effect surrounded yourself with a fiery barrier. This will serve to exclude those alien psychic forces that might interfere with your meditation. For remember that the power of thought is such that your symbolic gesture has created an etheric barrier which is no less real for not being physical. After all this effort you should feel relaxed enough to sit down and commence your visualization practice.

At this point, when your visualization is still little more than an academic exercise, we ought perhaps to decide once and for all what is the true nature of the forms you will be visualizing when eventually you begin your magical work. It will help if we at once plant our feet firmly on the ground and assert that the visualized images, though apparently real in themselves, are in fact no more than representations of an imperceptible reality. We shall find that the best argument in favour of this concealed reality comes from practical experience where results alone matter.

These results will demonstrate that while the forms themselves may have no phenomenal existence, they nevertheless have an extrinsic value of their own. In this respect they can be compared with a ten-pound note or dollar bill, which derives its worth not from the paper on which it is printed, but from what it represents in terms of credit with the Bank of England or the US Treasury. The same is true of the seemingly concrete shapes we shall visualize when we contact the astral world. By treating these as if they enjoyed an objective existence outside our consciousness, we are able to take advantage of the specialized forces they represent. For

practical purposes, therefore, it is as unnecessary to question their immediate validity as it is to doubt the credit promised by the chief cashier of the Bank of England on every ten-pound note we handle.

Even if the results obtained enable us to postulate the reality behind the astral forms, not everyone will be convinced. In any case there is always the risk that the results obtained in the early days of your magical career will be too meagre to inspire much confidence in the astral forms you are using, and without confidence it is unlikely the results will ever improve.

Before we discuss the nature of these forms, we must first concede that the astral world is incompatible with the old-fashioned materialistic viewpoint which accepts matter as the sole criterion of reality. Fortunately few materialists nowadays go this far anyway, and most have already abandoned their former simple faith in 'matter' as something characterized by mass and occupation of space. Instead, as we noted earlier, modern physics is having to contend with wonders like non-causal effects, irreducible uncertainty and a rival substance which, for want of a better word, has been dubbed 'anti-matter'. Compared with these, the astral planes are indeed simple stuff. Even so, it remains a fact that these planes, like much else in the universe, are as yet inaccessible both to our senses and to the most refined scientific instruments. Yet to infer from this that they do not exist would be to adopt the premise that reality depends for its existence on our awareness of it. This is clearly untenable.

The trouble with the astral world is not its unreality, since the results of magic prove that it is real enough, but its inaccessibility to our senses. Telepathy has already satisfied researchers, admittedly not all, that the human mind is not entirely dependent on the senses for the information it receives. I know that telepathy, like other forms of extra-sensory perception, is fast becoming a peg on which to hang all sorts of occult hats, but all we are inferring from it is that the mind can in certain circumstances receive direct impressions from agents outside itself. This faculty, irrespective of the label we attach to it, is what enables us to become aware of the astral world. The mechanics of this awareness are best explained if we think of the mind as a mirror in which images are reflected. Most of these are due to the reaction of one or more of our sense organs, but it is still the mind that does most of the work. This is what Aristotle meant when he declared the words 'I see' really mean 'I have seen', for the mind has in this case intervened to sort out whatever

impressions were made upon the optic nerve. Because of this the mind can be described as the surface which reflects the reality known to us by experience. Like the celebrated Lady of Shalott we behold the outside world in a looking-glass and like Tennyson's heroine we need only change the angle of the glass for it to reflect new and hitherto unsuspected things. This is exactly what visualization is intended to achieve. It is the tilting of our mental mirror to accommodate new images derived from the astral world.

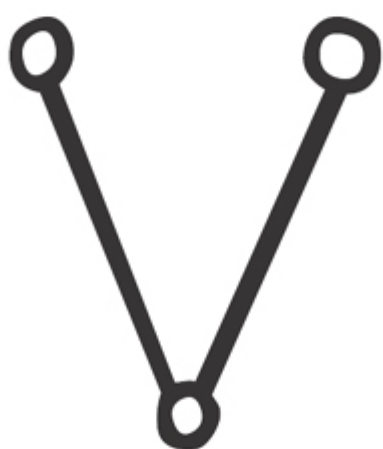
When our mind perceives these images they appear to be as solid and three-dimensional as any received via the senses. But no one is naive enough nowadays to believe that lions, snakes and knights in armour populate the astral planes. We see such things because our subconscious has translated the non-pictorial impressions it has directly received into objective forms recognizable by the mind or consistent with what it expects them to look like. It does this because the mind would otherwise be incapable of appreciating them, so accustomed is it to receiving only sensory impressions. It is the old adage: '*Nihil in intellectu est quod non prius in sensu erat.*' To this extent, any magical image we visualize may be said to be subjective. It is, after all, our subconscious that has created it for us. On the other hand, the image is at the same time a reflection of something else, and so may be said to have an objective existence as well. Thus when we subjectively visualize an astral form we make an image which has as its subject an objective astral force. We may say that we are accepting at one and the same time both the subjectivity of the object and the objectivity of the subject.

All that remains to consider is the appearance of the forms themselves. The attribution of particular forms to different cosmic principles occurred very early in the history of mankind. In that time, one that witnessed also the dawn of magic, it seemed only reasonable to anthropomorphize the forces discernible behind natural phenomena. These traditional personifications survive to this day and bear the stamp of their primitive origin. The pity is that the rather simplistic psychology behind them has tended to obscure the merits of the system. Yet its very antiquity is also its strength for the traditional forms have by now become part of what Jung would call the collective unconscious. As this is by definition something much larger than the individual unconscious, it follows that at some point the forms we visualize merge into larger forms which have an existence

outside ourselves. They may constitute what Jungians would call an archetypal memory, although occultists prefer to describe them as etheric thought forms. Because of them the shapes we visualize are only partly self-induced, since they take on the appearance of astral forms already in existence. We may say in conclusion, therefore, that although any astral lions, snakes or knights in armour we visualize are not quite the real thing, they are as near to it as dammit.

[1](#) A similar expansion and contraction was proposed by Rudolf Steiner and further developed by his friend and close collaborator, Guenther Wachsmuth (1898-1967) in his book, part of a trilogy, *Erde und Menschen*. Wachsmuth's best-known work, *Etheric Forces in Cosmos, Man and Nature* is worth reading, though, not unexpectedly, his speculation seldom strays from Anthroposophical orthodoxy.

[2](#) If uncertain about the pronunciation of the Hebrew words, ask someone familiar with the language to advise you. Note that some people, uncomfortable with Hebrew, substitute other terms, often those designating the appropriate *chakras*. These points are along a supposed column, part of our subtle body, that ascends from the base of the spine to the top of the head. Along it flows the life force (*prana*), its activity differing within each of the seven principal *chakras*. These differences are relevant to the practice of both yoga and tantra, likewise sometimes of magic.



THE MEANING OF RITUAL

Before going on to examine some of the rituals used in magic, it is worthwhile pausing to consider what ritual is and what exactly it is meant to achieve. The word itself is enough to put some people off, and I must confess that it took me a long time to get used to the idea that ritual could serve any useful purpose. A Nonconformist upbringing made me jib at the pomp and circumstance surrounding some church services, and having been taught that splendid vestments brought one no nearer to God I took the view that the money spent on such things could be put to better uses. Nor am I even now completely reconciled to all forms of ceremonial. Too often they seem to have been designed only to dazzle those watching, as well as pander to the vanity of the participants.

Of course, ritual is more than just an excuse for dressing up and swinging the occasional incense burner. All religious worship, however simple, becomes ritualistic once it follows a formal, prearranged pattern. There is nothing wrong in this. Without such a pattern, communal worship would lack cohesion, which is why even Quaker meetings fit themselves within a definite framework. However, ritual is not only a safeguard against what we might call liturgical anarchy, but serves also to concentrate the thoughts of those present on a common object of devotion. Many rituals do this by recreating in symbolic fashion one of the sacred mysteries of a particular religion. For example, the Roman Catholic Mass, a dramatic re-enactment of the sacrifice on Calvary, seeks to ensure that every worshipper fixes his undivided attention on the crucifixion of Christ, thereby better to experience the central mystery of his faith.

To this extent ritual may be said to have a psychological motive, but there is another more important reason for its performance. On one level the Catholic Mass is the re-enactment of a historical event, but at a certain point the play-acting merges with the sublime reality it is striving to imitate. This happens when the priest speaks the words of consecration over the Host, after which the appearance of bread disguises the actual crucified body of Christ. From then on the ritual assumes an awesome sacramental meaning by becoming the outward and visible sign of an inward divine grace.

These two aspects of ritual, the psychological and the sacramental, are not confined to Christianity; they recur in pagan worship all over the world, and, apparently, throughout history. Rituals are conducted in two stages: first, the worshipper attunes himself to the sacred mystery being performed and then, usually as the climax, the presence of a particular deity is invoked. Magic ritual is no exception, and so Kabbalistic rites, to take one example, may be regarded as the finite embodiment of all the mystical content of the Tree of Life. The adept's slightest gesture can thus extend through all the worlds of being into the very heart of the Godhead, and any words he whispers will echo throughout the length and breadth of the universe.

In magic the psychological benefits of ritual arise from the fact that every object in range of the adept's senses has a symbolic connection with the idea behind the ceremony. This symbolism may not always be apparent, but you may be assured that having evolved over hundreds, nay thousands, of years, it is already well known to those deeper levels of your mind that remain in communion with the collective unconscious. Indeed, we know that all the symbols used in magic have their powerful astral counterparts which, you will recall, are but the appearance of the force they represent. Form, sound, colour and movement are all pressed into the service of magic, as also is incense which through the sense of smell can appeal to whatever part of the subconscious we wish to arouse. In short, everything involved in the rite will have been carefully chosen with a view to its effect upon the mind of the celebrant.

At this point we should mention that apart from all the material means to induce the required states of consciousness, some occultists also advocate the use of sex and drugs. Sex we shall discuss later, and as for drugs, all we need say is that those generally recommended are of the kind which produces visions rather than euphoria—hashish used to be a favourite before LSD and Mexican mushrooms became fashionable in the nineteen-sixties. This is not the place to discuss the wisdom of drug-taking, although clearly the excessive use of drugs, as of anything else, may cause serious harm. It has recently been suggested that the so-called 'soft' drugs are no more unhealthy than alcohol or tobacco, but you should not forget that in many, if not most, countries it is still illegal to possess them.

Fortunately, as far as magic is concerned, drugs are useful only in certain advanced operations and are seldom recommended in work

undertaken alone. The reason for this, presumably, is that narcotics reduce one's conscious control of the will, and without that control the chance of success becomes remote. If we accept the claim of Aleister Crowley, himself no stranger to drugs, that magic is 'the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with the Will', then clearly anything that compromises the will's efficient function makes success less certain or else produces results other than those intended. In any case, some magic rituals are so complicated that the adept needs all his wits about him to do the job properly. There is so much exorcising, consecrating, asperging, fumigating and perfuming going on that he would find little time for a quick puff, even if he fancied one.

And where does all this frenetic activity take place? The author of the *Key of Solomon* (who most certainly was not Solomon),¹ instructs us to seek out

...places that lie concealed, distant and removed from the haunts of men. For that reason desolate and unfrequented regions are the most appropriate, such as the borders of lakes, forests, dark and sombre places, old and deserted houses, whither men scarce ever come; mountains, caves and grottos; gardens, woods and orchards; but best of all are crossroads and the spot where four paths conjoin in the depth and blackness of the night.

Mercifully pseudo-Solomon has the good sense to tell us later that our own rooms, suitably consecrated, will do at a pinch.

In an ideal world the room used for magic would be devoted solely to that purpose. But just as a scientist could experiment over the kitchen sink if denied a laboratory, so the occultist can make do with his bedroom, living-room or study if he must. Naturally the everyday associations of such a room may be distracting to begin with, but a little mental discipline will enable anyone to overcome these difficulties. Methods of consecrating the room are described later and these, together with a locked door, should keep out all undesirable influences, whether astral or mundane. Even so, you will find that some rites are best performed at special places, which is why our contemporary Druids troop all the way to Stonehenge for their traditional pre-dawn observances.

Certain magical weapons are also needed for ritual work. Occultists have always insisted that these must be virgin, which means that they should be used for no other purpose save magic. There is also a tradition

that they should be bought without haggling, although another more extreme tradition insists that far from buying his equipment, the really dedicated magician will forge his own. It is my opinion that provided the tools you use are 'demagnetized' and thereafter employed only for magic, there is no real harm in using the ready-made article. With a little imagination even the humblest kitchen knife can stand in for the most ornate sword. This does not mean, of course, that there is nothing to be gained from fashioning your own ritual tools whenever possible. The greater the trouble you take over this, the more your personality becomes associated with the instrument you are making. If you can manage it, try at least to carve your own hazel, possibly almond, wand or construct your own incense burner. It will be well worth the effort.

Earlier we observed that most ritual has a sacramental function. In this respect it merely copies nature which, being nothing less than the Absolute made manifest, is possibly the supreme sacrament, one through which the highest spiritual forces are mediated. In the same way, because it too is the outward sign of an inner meaning, magic ritual is endowed with its own intrinsic sacredness. By its performance there occurs *ipso facto* a mystical reunion between appearance and reality. The prescribed ceremonial may therefore be repeated by anyone with exactly the same results, for its effectiveness lies in the rite and not in the personality of the celebrant. The results, in other words, occur *ex opere operato*, or by virtue of the action, and not *ex opere operantis*, or by virtue of the agent's acting. Nevertheless the agent clearly has an important role to play if the action he is performing is to release its self-contained force. If things were otherwise it would be like handing a screwdriver and length of wire to someone from the rain forest and expecting him to mend a fuse. He would have all the things needed to restore the power except the essential knowledge of what to do with them. Likewise, in the celebration of the Mass the unconsecrated host remains a wafer of unleavened bread until the priest pronounces the words '*Hoc est enim corpus meum*' above it. Each of the magic rituals that have been handed down to us similarly depends on the conscious participation of the magician who must see to it that he does the right things in the right order and at the right time. He too must speak the appropriate words if he is to convert the accidental appearance of the things around him into the substantive reality they represent.

Words are important in magic because they are regarded not just as a means of communication but as an intrinsic part of the thing they name. They can therefore be accepted as a substitute for that thing because they contain, so to speak, its essence. From this it follows that to know the name of someone is to have power over them, and we have all read stories in which someone, be it Rumpelstiltskin or the angel that wrestled with Jacob, is reluctant to reveal his name to a possible adversary. A knowledge of the names of angels, spirits and demons has always been highly prized by magicians,² but to the Kabbalists the greatest name of all is undoubtedly the divine name since for them it ensouls the very power of God. Already in the Old Testament there was such awe surrounding this name that synonyms were commonly used. Among them were *El*, usually in combination with other words such as *El Elyon* ('Most High') *El Olam* (Everlasting) and *El Shaddai* (Eternal) as well as names such as *Tzabaoth* (Lord of Hosts) and *Adonai* (Lord) many of which recur throughout magical literature. The real and personal name of God, however, was composed of the four Hebrew letters YHVH (Yod, He, Vau, He), and as Hebrew has no vowels this has been translated as both Yahweh and Jehovah. The word YHVH itself is generally believed to mean 'He is', and you will recall that when God addressed Moses from the burning bush He identified himself with the words, 'I am that I am'. Because the divine name was so revered by the Israelites, as it is today by religious Jews everywhere, it was scarcely ever uttered, with the result that no one now has any idea of its correct pronunciation.³ So fearful were people of using the actual name that they chose instead to refer to it obliquely as the Tetragrammaton, or 'four-lettered name', a word which soon accumulated its own store of magical power.

The confusion of identity between an object and its name probably has its origins far back in prehistory when speech first began. The Book of Genesis even tells us that one of God's first tasks was to name everything He had created, as if that put the finishing touches to His handiwork (Genesis ii, 19). The story may hint at the fact that, as our own experience confirms, most, if not all of our mental activity is verbal. This is a notion that linguistic philosophers are still exploring, but whereas most would dispute the close relationship between a name and the thing named which magic proposes, few would deny that a creative thought, perhaps even a barely formulated impulse, needs always to express itself in the form of

words. Sensing the truth of this, magic has equated the divine self-awareness that resulted in creation with God's discovery of His own identity or 'name'. That name, so ineffably majestic that no human tongue dared speak it, becomes thereby the sacred word that brought the universe into being. It is the eternal Logos that dwells with God, the mighty Tetragrammaton of the Jews, the Tehuti of the Egyptians and the creative word of a hundred other cultures.

Inseparable from magical speculation about words is the theory of vibrations, which supposes that certain sounds have an acoustic impact on both the physical and astral worlds. That vibrations do indeed govern sound is confirmed by physics which teach that sound originates when molecules begin to vibrate and trigger off a wave formed by the sympathetic vibration of neighbouring molecules. In the same way sounds can only be heard when air causes our eardrums to vibrate in such a way that it excites the terminals of the main auditory nerve. Since the fifth century B.C. when Pythagoras studied sound by plucking at a one-stringed harp, science has developed specialized techniques for measuring its pressure, velocity, frequency and intensity. We know, for example, that certain high-frequency sounds, no matter how intense, remain inaudible to the human ear: like beams of light these ultrasonic sounds streak through the air around us. It is possible, too, that if sound is the product of atmospheric disturbance, then the rotation of the planets may create a celestial, albeit ultrasonic, music like that imagined by Pythagoras, although as so much of space is a vacuum, these planetary harmonies are unlikely to travel far. It is certain that because sound vibrations, whether audible or not, are in reality propagated motion, and motion implies energy, then currents of kinetic energy are generated by every sound we make. Presumably some of this energy is lost quite quickly in the form of heat, but even so there are some vibrations energetic enough to affect physical objects. It is well known that a certain note played on the violin has shattered glass, while bridges capable of supporting huge weights have collapsed under a company of soldiers marching in step. There is also the Biblical account of the walls of Jericho crumbling at the sound of a fanfare of trumpets. Like the physical world, the astral planes can in some circumstances likewise be affected by sound, so that verbal magic may be said to derive its powers not only from the idea contained in certain words,

but from the peculiar vibrations these words themselves produce when spoken.

Similar vibrations are allegedly caused by numbers, and between them and names a close relationship has long been adduced by occultists. Indeed, some names are frequently reduced to numerical values, each of which is said to have a special vibration that distinguishes it from others. Mysterious numbers abound in most religious and magical traditions, seven, ten and twelve being universal favourites. Once again it is Pythagoras who indirectly provides magicians with most of their lore about numbers. He and many other Greek philosophers felt confident that in the science of numerology, inherited, it was believed, from the Egyptians, they had discovered a way to identify the pattern on which nature was modeled.⁴ According to them, all things were numerically expressible and had come into being when the limited, represented by the odd numbers, emerged from the unlimited, represented by the evens. Since then this dualism has persisted throughout the universe. The view of Pythagoras was that numbers were composed of geometric figures arranged in various ways, but magicians have gone further and ascribed to them an eternal, formless existence that preceded their discovery by man. From here they go on to rhapsodize about numerical vibrations which they like describing in terms of light waves, musical rhythms and divine harmonies, their language betraying that poetical enthusiasm which is a congenital weakness of the occult breed.

Whatever doubts you may harbour about the significance of numbers, it is unwise to overlook the instructions you find about their use in ritual. The same holds true of any other advice you come across, for you will soon discover that results are hard to come by once you start tampering with the recommended procedures. After all, it is results we are after in practical magic. Without these our ritual would be no different from that of the Freemasons or the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes.

Needless to say, the type of results you get in magic will depend on the purpose of your ritual. In the early days it would be unreasonable to expect objective phenomena to occur, so you should not feel too disappointed if Lucifer and all the fallen angels fail to show up despite your most fervent conjurations. On the other hand, you should avoid becoming one of those timid occultists who dabble in ritual only for the feeling of exhilaration or the peace of mind it brings. Satisfying though these mental states may be,

they have nothing in common with the lasting, tangible benefits that can be obtained through the use of magic. The first thing you must always do therefore is decide what exactly you want your ritual to accomplish. This is important because it is the intention behind your ritual that will vivify it and bring it to fruition. It is why Kabbalists were fond of describing the intention as the soul which animated the body of every rite. It is thanks to it that each small step prescribed by ritual is guided through the World of Creation, the *ber'iah*, to the appropriate aspect of the Godhead. In other words, the intention is what transforms each ritual into a mystical adventure where for a few brief seconds the initiate can become the Adam Kadmon and so realize the macrocosm within himself.

Once the ritual intention is clear in your mind, consult the Table of Intentions (see pp. 130) and see what rite is appropriate. Let us assume by way of example that you are lovelorn, and the table has recommended that you undertake a rite of Venus. A glance at the Table of Correspondences will at once inform you what symbolism is needed for such a rite. These details have then to be incorporated in the master ritual described on pp. 161. In the case of a Venusian rite you will see from the advice given on the timing of rituals that it should take place on a Friday, since that day is ruled by Venus. There are also instructions on how to determine the most propitious hour, and this again will be that traditionally ruled by the relevant planet.

Returning to the correspondences, green you will find is the colour used in Venusian rites, and copper the appropriate metal for as many as possible of the ceremonial instruments. Copper's tendency to turn green is one reason for its supposed affinity with Venus; it is also suggested that this derives from the ancient practice of using polished copper to make mirrors. Another possible explanation is that Aphrodite is reported to have emerged from the sea just off the island of Cyprus, which in the ancient world was a major source of copper. The combination of green and copper should be continued, if possible, in any jewellery worn by the adept; emeralds set in copper, for example, would be an ideal adornment. As for scents, those with Venusian association include ambergris, musk, benzoin, myrtle, rose and sandalwood. Finally, we learn from the table that the sacrificial creatures might be a dove, sparrow or swan, though contemporary occultists concur that you may dispense with the sacrifice, thereby avoiding the justified wrath of animal rights groups.

These small details are not dragged in just to make the whole thing more complicated, although the energy spent trying to get everything right will be of value to the operation. The aim, as we have said, is to alert that part of your mind traditionally held to belong to the third heaven or realm of Venus. Once this fragment of your subconscious responds, it immediately links up with its macrocosmic equivalent. The ritual then becomes 'live', and every word and gesture is infused with the power of universal love. In order to recognize it, however, the adept's mind must already be filled with a corresponding emotion; you will gain nothing from magic if you set about it with the cool detachment of a scientist. A high degree of personal involvement is required, and unless you experience the appropriate emotion, be it love or pity, hate or anger, you will find that magic is as difficult as persuading a china hen to lay eggs. To perform a rite of Venus satisfactorily, therefore, you would need to cultivate those extremes of joy and sadness felt by people in love. There are no half measures, and it becomes almost literally a case of '*Vénus toute entière à sa proie attachée*.'

If your imagination fails to transport you to the required heights of emotion, a useful technique is the old Couéist trick of reciting a suitable mantra which serves to focus the attention on a desired result. The result is a self-induced emotion, which means that the tides of astral power flowing into you will remain subject to your will, and at any given moment can be directed towards the attainment of your ritual intention.

The climax to all magical ritual occurs when the adept draws into himself the astral force he has evoked so as to project it towards a chosen object. To do this he must surrender his complete being to the force waiting to possess it, and this he does by cultivating a state of mind or, rather, madness, akin to the divine frenzy of the Bacchantes. There are various ways of doing this, and the adept must choose the one that suits him personally. The usual method is intense concentration, but some magicians resort to sex. As this is one of the things that has given magic a bad name in some circles, let us put the record straight before we go any further, for by drawing attention to the sexual element in magic we risk bestowing on it an importance it does not deserve. However, the subject must be dealt with, if only because of the strong feelings it arouses, not least in those who think that magicians spend their weekends deflowering young virgins in chilly, candle-lit crypts.

Sex has played a part in magic since the earliest times. Among primitive communities where strength depended on numbers, the sexual act was necessary to the survival of the tribe. But survival depended on a great many other factors as well, including, once agriculture had been discovered, good crops. It cannot have been long, therefore, before the earth's fecundity came to be regarded in sexual terms, with every winter seen as a period of gestation prior to the rebirth of spring. Herein, possibly, lay the beginnings of religious belief.

Although differing views prevail among anthropologists, one that's still popular maintains that primitive cultures were matriarchal in character, with the earliest human beings worshiping an earth mother who was looked upon with awe and affection as a sort of munificent providence. That the earth was capable of producing new life was something our ancestors knew from experience, but instead of grasping that her fertility was part of the seasonal cycle, they thought it depended on prayer and sacrifice. The sacrificial victim seems often to have been a young person whose character and appearance made him or her a worthy offering to the Supernal Mother.

It was also believed that without sexual impregnation the earth, like any other female, was incapable of producing anything. To ensure good crops recourse was accordingly had to a form of sympathetic magic whereby a man and a woman, one of whom might be a member of the priesthood, copulated in order to symbolize the earth's impregnation. In some cultures the object was to encourage the appropriate deities, the male and female principles of nature, to do likewise, but among others it is likely that given the converse of the 'as above, so below' principle, ritual copulation was thought to be sufficient in itself.

The belief is, though not all anthropologists share it, that over time primitive societies adopted an increasingly patriarchal character. The deity they worshipped became a sky father who, unlike the earth mother he had usurped, was jealous of his privileges and authority. One reason for the change may be that as men began better to understand, as well as conquer their environment, they felt guilty about assuming responsibilities they had hitherto been content to leave to the gods. They would have learned, for example, that a good harvest depended more on agricultural planning than on the earth's inherent munificence.

The only thing about which they could do nothing was the weather, and this again must have directed their attention from the earth to the sky. The form of their worship also changed, with the old fertility rituals slowly giving way to expiatory rites intended to avert the wrath of a stern father god above. All of which coincided with a fundamental change in their ethical outlook which—as Freud would insist—happened because the deity assumed the characteristics of Laius, the jealous father of Oedipus. Ever fearful of being supplanted by his precocious children on earth, the sky father sulked, bitter and resentful, behind the clouds.⁵

The sinfulness of these children of the earth, like that of Oedipus, manifested itself sexually, and so the cure prescribed by religious morality was sexual repression. In this way sin came to be identified above all with sexuality and only to a lesser extent with various forms of antisocial behaviour. Sex typified man's rebellion against God, the disobedience of Adam, while virtue was identified with submission to authority, asceticism and a sense of unworthiness. Soon the sexual act, accepted as something entirely natural during the matriarchal period, had become constricted by a multitude of taboos.

True or not, what is undeniable is that in the Western world our attitude to sex was largely determined by Christianity, which inherited an existing list of do's and don'ts, mostly the latter, from Judaism. The early Church regarded sex as evil, but a necessary evil, given that the end times were taking longer to come than everyone expected. And so a compromise had to be made. Sexual activity was permissible but only when confined to the marital bed, and even there its procreative function, nothing else, should be uppermost in the minds of the participants. However, because sex was so devilishly enjoyable, a further compromise was needed and sex became an officially approved way in which the spouses (but only they) might express their love for each other. Yet even ecclesiastical approval could not rid the leopard of its spots and there lingered the old feeling that sex meant nasty goings-on in that region *inter faecem et urinam*, which both repelled and fascinated St. Augustine. Nor did sex lose its link with reproduction, so important to a small tribe like the Israelites. The modern controversy over birth control within the Roman church is a survival of this. Today there remains, officially at least, a blanket condemnation of any sexual activity which thwarts the generative processes.

Like his pagan ancestors and most liberal thinkers, the contemporary magician accepts sex as a natural activity devoid of theological implications. This does not mean magicians are a lecherous breed; on the contrary, there are grounds for supposing that the rejection of taboos may reduce the genital appetite which, like most appetites, craves forbidden fruit. Yet it is probably true that people for whom sex is something to be enjoyed as and when the opportunity arises do get a chance to gratify their appetites more often than their guilt-ridden fellow citizens. This, of course, is enough to warrant the disapprobation of the latter who unconsciously envy other people their indulgence in something they themselves have renounced. The object of repressed desires can often evoke feelings of rage or loathing, which explains why, until the middle of the nineteen-sixties, sexual freedom was still deemed a threat both to established religion and the moral health of the community. In 1969 a bishop writing in *The Times* about parapsychology was careful to dissociate his own pious brand from the 'obscene occultism' which he claimed was rampant throughout England.⁶

Although sex plays a part in magic, it is not indispensable. Like drugs and mantric repetition it is one of several ways of achieving that complete involvement which is the climax of all ritual. When later you read the description of the master ritual, you will see how the final 'divine frenzy' resembles sexual ecstasy with the outpouring of power comparable to orgasm. This is not sexual indulgence for its own sake, although the incidental enjoyment is nothing to be ashamed of. The fact is that by its very nature sex is the closest we get to imitating, however imperfectly, the creative power attributed to God. In its way it is a mystical realization of the One which contains all things, for it represents a conjunction of two separate but complementary elements, usually (but not necessarily) male and female, being the symbolic, indeed synergistic, fusion of both, just as the central pillar on the Tree of Life reconciles the pillar on either side. If, however, you are long past it, too shy or just do not fancy the idea, you can keep off sex and still practise magic. What you must not do, however, is see the mark of the beast on anyone whose views differ from your own.

We have noted how sex was often believed to imitate the power of God. Occult tradition goes further and insists that sex also releases its own form of power which can then be used in magic to reinforce or propel the elemental power evoked by ritual. Certainly, if all thinking processes

generate a form of electromagnetic energy, then the intensity of feeling that accompanies the sexual act must release its own special force. In occultism, therefore, ritual sex is thought to possess an intrinsic value in addition to its symbolic and psychological purposes. It is difficult to provide scientific justification for this theory, although the reason may be that scientists have not yet bothered to consider its validity. The only exception is the late Dr. Wilhelm Reich (1897–1957), whose findings, though almost universally rejected, merit our brief attention because they reflect the esoteric view.

Wilhelm Reich began his career as Freud's chief assistant in Vienna, but they parted company after a disagreement over the cause of the morbid anxiety they detected in many of their patients. Freud believed that this anxiety sprang from frustrated libido, but Reich blamed the absence from the sexual act of what he called true orgasm. By true orgasm he meant that final ecstatic shiver which he had observed in copulating animals. Reich endeavored to find a physiological basis for his theories by measuring the electrical potency of people's erotogenic zones before, during and after sex. His oscillographs and infrared apparatus provided him with what he considered to be definitive proof that sexual impulses were bio-electrical in nature. His greatest breakthrough came when, by his own account, he discovered that units of energy, which he later called orgones, were produced whenever orgasm happened. These orgones were, he claimed, particles of an elementary cosmic energy whose existence could be registered by geiger counters, measured by electroscopes and even reproduced on photographic plates. So sure was he of their physical existence that he later asserted orgones were blue in colour, like the sky whence they came.

According to Reich the orgiastic free-for-alls that were a feature of pagan religion had a serious orgone-producing purpose behind them. More important to him as a psychologist, however, was the therapeutic effect which orgasm had on those taking part. Towards the end of his career Reich had come to see himself as the Messiah of a new sexual millennium. The unremitting hostility of his detractors probably drove him to make exaggerated claims which hardly encouraged his scientific colleagues to take his work seriously, but there have been sporadic signs of a revival of interest in his work. Norman Mailer, Saul Bellow and William Burroughs

were among those that contributed to it, but the existence of orgones remains unproven.

Because the magician, like Dr Reich, accepts sex as something natural, he can also accept deviations from what is generally regarded as normal sexual behaviour.⁷ Normal is in any case the wrong word, since it is a relative term to which the majority attributes universal significance. This does not mean heterosexual occultists suddenly lose interest in the opposite sex, or that their homosexual colleagues abjure their own. There is scope for all within the magic circle. You will often hear it suggested, however, that the most competent magician will be bisexual, since he can combine within himself both male and female principles, the theory being that although God is customarily referred to in masculine terms, He must, as the sum total of all things, be feminine as well.

The female element in God is known in Kabbalistic literature as the *Shekinah* which literally translated means the 'in-dwelling' of God, that is, His omnipresence and His active manifestation in the world. (For that reason it is often identified with the sphere of Malkuth.) In the *Sefer-hab-Bahir* the *Shekinah* is depicted as a semi-independent feminine aspect of God that has somehow or other been separated from the divine source. Some of the Kabbalistic rituals of this period are concerned therefore with effecting a reunion of the two. In early Christian theology the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, was likewise thought of in female terms, when its role was curiously similar to that of the *Shekhinah*. The cult of the Virgin Mary likewise gained ground, at least in part, because it made up for the absence of an overtly female aspect in the Trinity, although devotion to the Mother of God is regarded as inferior to that accorded to God. We can understand therefore why the bisexual man or woman is sometimes deemed to be a truer image of the Creator than the exclusively heterosexual or homosexual. However, one's sexual proclivities are rarely of one's choosing, so the main thing is to stick to what is natural to you and get on with it.

If you decide to fit sex into the master ritual and are working alone, the experience will, of course, have to be auto-erotic.⁸ In that case you should, if the correspondences allow, try to visualize the possessing entity in appropriately sexual terms. This will increase emotional involvement in what you are doing and simultaneously contribute to the store of power building up around you. If you have an assistant working with you, your

partnership can, if you both wish it, be extended to the sexual act.⁹ Indeed, on the basis that the more sex there is, the greater the power, you may be tempted to branch out into sex *à trois*, *à quatre* or indeed into as many permutations as will fit inside the circle. That's your business, not mine.

Despite this encouragement, you should avoid falling into the habit of esoteric lechery. Unlike those immature sensation-seekers who occasionally use magic to heighten their sexual pleasure, the real adept views the sexual content of his rituals as subordinate to their magical purpose. It is a means to an end and not the end itself. You should accordingly examine your motives before you make up your mind to combine sex with magical activity. If you are looking for an excuse for sex, forget the magic and have the sex without the garnish. The pity is that many people turn to magic, and especially to what they fondly believe is 'black' magic, in the hope of indulging a ravenous libido. Despite the magic circle and the Kabbalistic jargon, all they are really enjoying is a conventional orgy in unconventional surroundings. They would achieve the same, were they to hire a circus ring for their diversions.

Because sex in magic is so often associated with that old bogey, the Black Mass, we had better digress a little and consider this strange ritual. From the start it must be emphasized that as the Black Mass is meant to be a grotesque parody of the Roman Catholic Mass, it can have no significance except to Roman Catholics. Common sense tells us that unless someone believes in the efficacy of the 'White' Mass, he cannot believe in its 'Black' equivalent. Thus when at the climax of a Black Mass the consecrated host is insulted by priest and onlookers, the blasphemy is evident only to people who believe that the host is nothing less than the crucified body of Christ.

The French novelist J.K. Huysmans left a memorable description of the satanic Mass in his novel *Là-bas*. As Huysmans is known to have dabbled in occultism, it is likely that he once attended one of the Black Masses which, it seems, were a favourite attraction in *fin de siècle* Paris. The general idea behind the ceremony is to perform the opposite of what happens in the Catholic Mass. To this end every detail of the latter has been modified, often scatalogically, from beginning to end. The proceedings are, however, a great deal more inventive than one might imagine from the hoary reports of the Lord's Prayer recited backwards, the exaltation of evil in place of virtue and the inevitable black candles (which,

incidentally, do not defy physical law by burning upside down, as popular fiction supposes). Ideally, the celebrant of a Black Mass should be a priest of the Catholic Church, but it seems that in our secular age an ordinary lay person will do, provided he can get hold of a consecrated wafer. The important thing is that he must be naked, as must the young woman whose body serves as his altar. Towards the end of the ceremony the host is reviled by all present, and the ritual culminates with the sacrifice of a chicken or, rarer nowadays, a newly baptized infant, whose blood is poured into a chalice held between the woman's thighs. A scatological perversion of the communion then becomes the precursor to a general orgy in which the entire congregation is encouraged to take part.

What this deliberate nastiness has to do with traditional magic ritual is unclear, although in some of these Masses the priest will dedicate the ceremony to the realization of a particular intention. Thus we have the well-known story of Mme de Montespan who in the seventeenth century participated in at least one Black Mass in an endeavour to retain the affection of Louis XIV.¹⁰ Some time previously her distinguished compatriot Gilles de Rais had tried by the same means to restore his waning fortunes, though the subsequent murders attributed to him were nothing to do with magic. Modern devotees of the Black Mass are probably keener to gratify their *nostalgie de la boue* than to win either love or riches. Their interests are certainly very different from those of occultists, and the two are lumped together only by careless reporters and affronted clergymen. No doubt if you are prepared to pay for the privilege you may still witness a Black Mass in some European cities, but these are little more than squalid side-shows like the 'exhibitions' once put on for foreign tourists in Tangier, Cairo and Panama City. Lucifer, it would appear, is poorly served nowadays by his devotees.

As recently as the nineteen-sixties popular newspapers, short of copy, would routinely accuse modern witches of celebrating the Black Mass. The improbability of this particular accusation is shown up by the witches' contention that their practices and the beliefs on which they are based ante-date Christianity, so no version of the Catholic Mass, Black, White or Technicolored, played any part in them. It may be, of course, that in the past some witches mocked Christianity or insulted its devotional objects, but the aim of such behaviour would have been to demonstrate their allegiance to a separate religion of their own, nothing more.

A possible explanation of the link between witchcraft and the Black Mass was the belief, carefully nurtured by the ecclesiastical authorities, that the god the witches worshipped was the Devil or Old Nick. What exactly they worshipped is now a matter of conjecture, but some anthropologists suggest that their deities were a god and goddess symbolizing the male and female principles of nature. Because the male principle was represented by a goat-like figure, the Church had the bright idea of attributing horns and cloven hooves to its arch-fiend Satan. In this way the old pagan god became the devil of the new religion and his worship was soundly condemned.

The great impetus to modern witchcraft came from Margaret Murray (1863–1963), an Egyptologist-turned-folklorist whose books, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (1921) and, especially, *The God of the Witches* (1933), argued that witchcraft was the ancient religion of our continent. Today few, if any, anthropologists agree with Dr Murray's claims, but in the nineteen-fifties many witches and would-be witches were greatly encouraged by them, none more than Gerald Gardner, responsible for the 'tradition' that now bears his name. His books, like those on druidism and the neo-pagan revival, soon enjoyed widespread popularity, their back-to-nature philosophy, as well the erotic subtext, appealing to people in search of a novel form of spirituality. Few noticed that the claims made in them were not capable of objective verification or, if they did, weren't terribly bothered

According to Gardner, witches employ traditional methods to build up magical power which may then be used to realise a specific ambition. This, of course, is what the ritual magician does. Alex Sanders, responsible for a rival system to Gardner's, cheerfully borrowed from established magical tradition, the Kabbalah included. Indeed Gardner had already done the same himself, even soliciting the expert help of Aleister Crowley shortly before the latter's death in 1947. A certain imprecision enters their writing when they start discussing the nature of the power available to them. Sometimes it is said to be the combined willpower of the thirteen who make up the coven, sometimes a power inherent in the human body, sometimes the product of divine intervention at the climax of the rite. The first two possibilities may explain why nudity is observed by many covens, though Gardner's private inclinations account mostly for that. Others

maintain that by shedding their clothes, participants divest themselves of their mundane identity, and with it, all their worldly pretensions.

Contemporary witches hold monthly meetings called *esbats*¹¹ usually linked to the lunar cycle, at which the ordinary business of their coven is conducted and some magic may be worked. More important are the ‘solar’ Sabbats, their dates, at least in the Northern hemisphere, coinciding with the old Celtic—especially Irish—festivals.¹² To wiccans these represent three different aspects of the Goddess (maiden, mother and crone) and her relationship over the year with her consort, the Horned God.

A common feature of both witchcraft and magic, at least in the mind of the public, is the sexual element. Other movements with more or less occult connections are largely free from it. No one doubts, for example, that in the darkness of the seance room, spiritualists care for anything save the pleasures of the next world, although ectoplasmic forms, nowadays rare, presumably offered possibilities best overlooked.¹³ Nor are the Theosophists thought of as other than high-minded seekers after truth.¹⁴ Such high-mindedness does not go unenvied by some occultists who, in print at least, pretend that ritual sex is either non-existent in this enlightened Aquarian Age or was practised only by Aleister Crowley who, in addition, took drugs, tortured cats and buggered Victor Neuburg.

Crowley is the great *bête noire* (or 666, as he would put it) of twentieth-century occultism. His fellow magicians have damned him for publishing so many of their secrets, but as that has not stopped them following the example he set, his really unforgivable crime may be that the books he wrote are so much better than their own. No mean poet either, he is the Oscar Wilde of magic, though the latter's ‘feasting with panthers’ pales to insignificance beside Crowley's appetite for sex, drugs, and on occasion, cruelty. No one was more active than Crowley in perpetuating the legend of his own beastliness, but even allowing for a great deal of exaggeration, there remains much that is unsavory about the man and what he got up to. However, behind all the posturing there was an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of hermetic lore, much of which fortunately found its way into his writings. Even so, none of these are suitable for beginners, for they demand a certain basic knowledge if one is to extract anything of value from them. It is therefore wise to wait until you find an experienced guide to accompany you before you embark on Crowley's work. The

consequences of following some of his ritual instructions could be highly unwelcome.

Crowley—though he lived to the age of seventy-two—paid dearly for his excesses, his physical deterioration evident from photographs taken towards the end of his life. However, it would be foolish to conclude that this is the inevitable result of using sex in magic. In Crowley's case it was due to his deliberate flouting of all the rules conducive to good health. Anyone, magician or not, who indulges over many years in hashish, fasting, and self-mutilation—let's overlook the sex—is bound at the very least to end up with bags under his eyes. But to imply, as some writers do, that the same effects are caused by occasional ritual sex is not unlike warning adolescent boys that masturbation leads to blindness.

Finally, let me stress again that sex need play no part at all in your magical work, if you do not want it to. Excellent results can be achieved without it. Indeed, some people find that however good their intentions, they become so involved in the sexual part of the ritual that they forget the main purpose behind it. As a result, all their preparation goes by the board and any astral force accumulated is promptly squandered. The lesson seems to be that if you enjoy your ritual sex too much, keep off it, just as other people have to if they dislike sex or have no chance to try it out. The fact is that every ritual is inherently powerful, and what sex does is increase the magician's personal involvement so that its full potential may be realized. In addition, sex generates its own 'natural' power which supplements the rite's 'supernatural' power. The words 'natural' and 'supernatural' are used here to describe a power which in the first case is of physical origin and in the second of supra-physical origin, though manifesting itself on the physical plane. Neither form of power is, of course, any more natural than the other. What all this teaches us is that rituals are effective without sex, although the chances of success may be marginally enhanced by its inclusion.^{[15](#)}

So here you are, ready at last to get down to business. Or, to put it in the more dignified language of occult literature, you have reached the Pylon Gate that stands on the threshold of the temple. According to some experts this is the moment when, if you are ready to proceed, an enlightened person will show himself and help you along. For those who promise to be flyers in the occult movement this person may belong to an esoteric oligarchy known as the Masters. A great deal of controversy has

surrounded these august gentlemen ever since the early days when a Master (or Mahatma) named Morya appeared to the endearing Mme. Blavatsky, co-founder of the Theosophical Society, as she promenaded through Hyde Park with her father in 1851. He and a subordinate Koot Hoomi, would, she maintained, stay in touch with her for the remaining forty years of her life.

The belief is that such Masters are superior human beings who, though exempted from further incarnations, have chosen to defer their spiritual evolution in order to return to help the rest of us. In some schools of Mahā;yā;na Buddhism they are known as Bodhisattvas. A group of them is rumoured to live among the Himalayas, whence they emerge from time to time to do good works among us mortals, looking no different from ourselves. (This is how Mme. Blavatsky bumped into hers outside the Crystal Palace, though she sometimes got confused and claimed they met one moonlit night in Ramsgate.)

Some occultists deny that the Masters are genuine flesh-and-blood creatures. Instead, they believe them to be exalted spiritual beings who may on rare occasions assume bodily form through a mysterious process known as *kriyashakti*. An impressive-looking Asiatic known as the Tibetan, said to be a colleague of Morya and Koot Hoomi named Djwal Khul, materialized by these means in the home of a well-known occultist called Alice A. Bailey. Others claim with equal confidence that even temporary materialization is beneath the dignity of the Masters, who prefer to supervise events on earth without ever leaving the astral planes. There used also to be at least one fraternity in California which maintained that flying saucers were the means of transportation invented by a group of Masters, who commute regularly between Earth and Venus. From all of which you will have gathered that there are grounds for suspending one's belief in the Great White Brotherhood, as the Masters are collectively called, until one of them introduces himself to you. If they are as enlightened as is claimed, they will be no more offended by your scepticism than is Father Christmas.

The likelihood is that if you do meet someone who can help you with your magical training, he or she will be an ordinary person like yourself. And if you are fortunate enough to meet such a person, it will be when you least expect it. The true adept will never advertise his presence in advance. For this reason it is always best to fight shy of mystery-mongers and the

sycophantic coteries that gather round them. Obviously it is reassuring to belong to a group of people with common interests, but too often the esoteric groups who parade their credentials on the Internet and in magazines will, when you really get to know them, fail to live up to their promises. And remember too that a closer acquaintance with them will cost you money. In this mercenary age there is usually a cash desk outside the adytum.

Not all groups, I hasten to add, are like this, but the exceptions are hard to find. I know only too well that the path to high magic can be a lonely one, but far better to tread it alone than in unsuitable company. Sooner or later and quite by chance you will meet the right person or group, and you will be glad that you waited. For the young Rudolf Steiner it was an encounter with a herb gatherer named Felix Koguzki that eventually brought him face to face with his mentor, and your own encounter may be equally unexpected and, I hope, auspicious. So do not feel despondent if so far your only travelling companion is this book. The path before you is well lit. As one of the Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri¹⁶ puts it:

Open your eyes and you will see the door has been opened and the world of the gods lies within; and your spirit, rejoicing in this vision, will find itself drawn onwards and upwards. Now pause awhile and draw the divine essence into yourself, your eyes fixed upon the light. And, when you are ready, say 'Approach Lord'. With these words, the light will shine on you and as you gaze into its centre, you will behold a god, very young and exquisitely formed. His hair will be like the sun and his tunic as white as the snow.

That god is within yourself. To discover him is to know that you are not—and never have been—completely alone.

¹ Backdating and imputed authorship are common to most magical textbooks which, at various times, have been ascribed to, *inter alios*, Adam, Abel, Moses, Noah, Elijah and, of course, Hermes Trismegistus. Solomon's great reputation always rendered him as attractive to magicians as he later became to Freemasons. In the 13th century Roger Bacon was already bewailing the number of books attributed to that proverbially wise monarch. Of these, however, the *Key of Solomon* is by far the best known and has influenced magicians from the 14th century onwards.

² Iamblichus (250–325 A.D.) teaches in his *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians* that the names culled from ancient religious systems like those of Egypt and Assyria have an intrinsic magic virtue. This is due not only to the antiquity of the languages they are drawn from but to their origin in popular theology.

3 Aleister Crowley could not resist claiming that he alone knew how to pronounce this great name which, once spoken, would rend the universe asunder.

4 See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I, chs. 5 and 8.

5 The change is reflected also in the type of sacrifice offered. Whereas the earth mother received a victim chosen for his or her worthiness, the sky father was offered a criminal or a scapegoat who bore on his shoulders the sins of the people. The sacrifice thus became the symbolic murder of the precocious child, by which it was hoped to satisfy the jealousy of the paternal deity.

6 Dr. Mervyn Stockwood, Bishop of Southwark, *The Times*, May 2nd, 1969. His article is mild stuff compared with the ravings of the late Montague Summers, a Church of England curate who, following his conversion, claimed to be a Roman Catholic priest, and was the nearest thing to a modern Witchfinder General. For him, the slap and tickle of a witches' sabbat was the most heinous crime in Christendom. See his *Witchcraft and Black Magic* (Rider, London, 1945), and the same author's *History of Witchcraft and Demonology* (Routledge, London, 1956).

7 The danger in accepting that all in nature is natural and therefore permissible is obvious. It may lead to the kind of moral nihilism in which de Sade revelled. To prevent it one needs a common-sense ethical standard like that suggested when we discussed 'white' and 'black' magic: each individual has the right to act naturally provided his action harms no one else. It is a simplistic view of morality, yes, but as a rough and ready guide to good conduct there is much to be said in its favour.

8 Onanism and nocturnal emissions were believed by early Jewish commentators to be instigated by Lilith, the First Eve (she was sacked for insubordination) and Queen of Demons, who, with her cohorts, sought to procure bodies for themselves out of the seed spilled by human beings. This led to the belief that every act of impurity, whether deliberate or accidental, engendered foul demons. Sometimes the devilish instigators of these acts were seen as incubi (male) and succubi (female), their existence endorsed, a tad unwillingly, by no less an authority than St. Augustine. Both featured prominently in accounts of the witch trials throughout early modern Europe.

9 Magical partnerships do not always have a sexual content. Some alchemists, for example, preferred to work with a *soror mystica*, with whom they enjoyed a platonic relationship or sacred marriage (the *hieros gamos*). That said, the latter term referred also to a marital relationship where there was a conjunction of bodies as well as of minds. Note, however, that group work does not always culminate in a pan-sexual debauch. On the contrary, the proceedings of most magical lodges are as eminently respectable as a royal investiture.

10 See Anne Somerset, *The Affair of the Poisons: Murder, Infanticide and Satanism at the Court of Louis XIV* (St, Martin's Press, London, 2003)

11 Some suggest the word is derived from the Old French *esbahir*, which, they claim, meant to enjoy oneself. In fact *esbahir* means to be startled or shocked. What the word does resemble is sabbat, derived either from the Thracian god Sabazius or, more likely, the Hebrew *Shabbat*.

12 These are Yule or Winter Solstice (21 December (Northern Hemisphere)/21 June (Southern Hemisphere)), Imbolc or Candlemas (1 February (N)/1 August (S)), Vernal Equinox (c. 20 March (N) / 20 September (S)), Beltane or May Day (30 April (N)/30 October (S)), Mid-Summer or Summer Solstice (c. 20 June (N)/ c. 20 December (S)), Lammastide or Lughnasadh (31 July (N)/31 January (S)), Autumn Equinox (c. 20 September (N)/21 March (S)), Samhain or Hallowe'en (night of 31 October-1 November (N)/night of 30 April/1 May (S)).

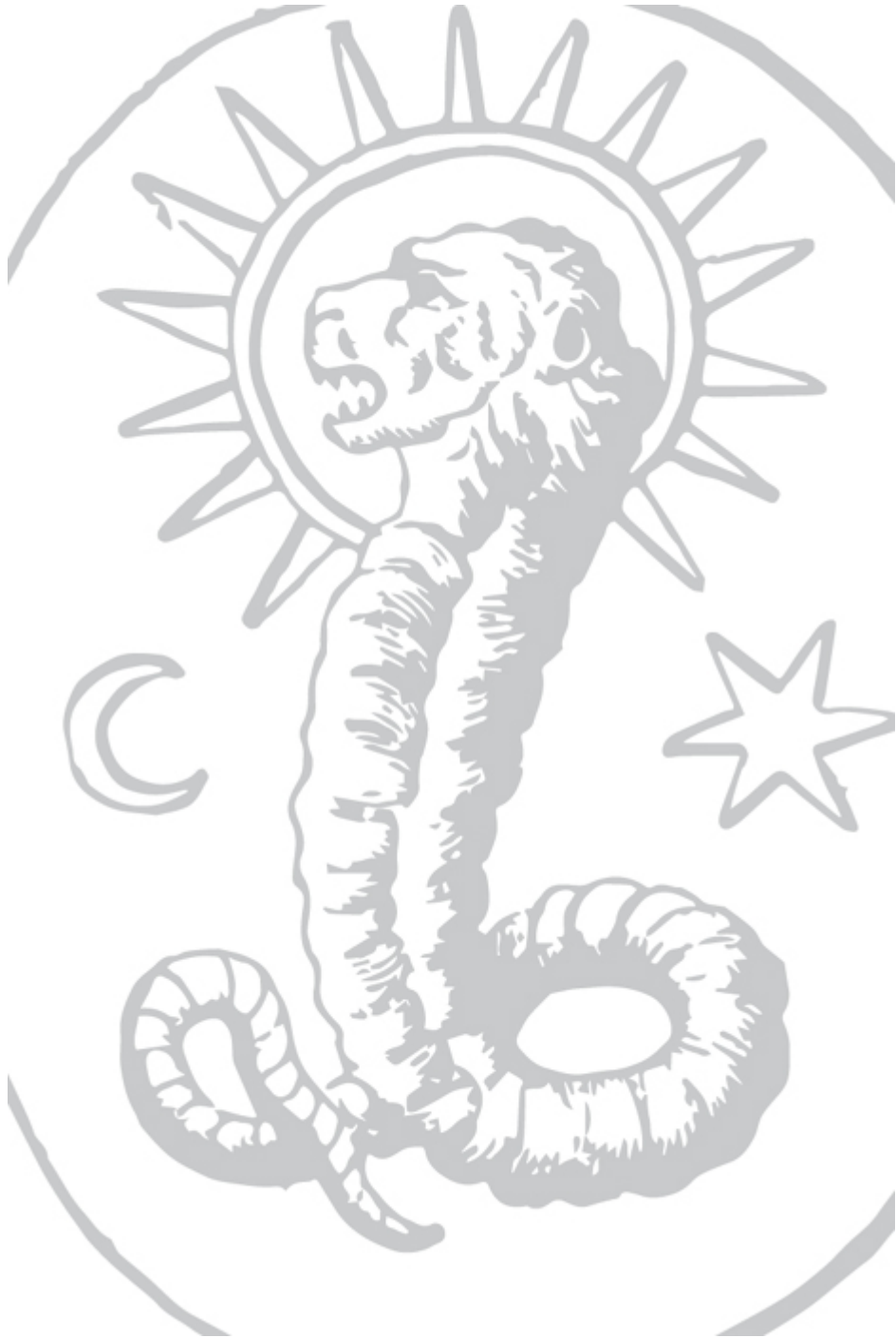
13 The 'spirit' of Katie King, which may or may not have been the medium Florrie Cook in her shift, was renowned for the hugs and kisses she bestowed on gentlemen sitters of a certain age. Her stoutest defender was Sir William Crookes, the eminent scientist, who spoke fulsomely of 'the brilliant purity of her complexion, the ever-varying expression of her most mobile features, now over-shadowed with sadness... now smiling with all the innocence of happy girlhood.' The reader is

certain to be entertained by Trevor H. Hall's masterly account of these carryings-on, both in *The Spiritualists* (Duckworth, London, 1962) and, at greater length, in *The Medium and the Scientist: the Story of Florence Cook and Sir William Crookes* (Prometheus Books, London, 1985.)

[14](#) Apart, that is, from the late 'Bishop' Leadbeater, whose fondness for adolescent boys caused a flutter in the Theosophical dovecotes. For further details see A. H. Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant* (Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1960 and Hart-Davis, London, 1963) but, especially, Gregory Tillet, *The Elder Brother. A Biography of Charles Webster Leadbeater* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1982.)

[15](#) The magician's penchant for anthropomorphizing the forces he summons is evident even where sex is concerned. Sex is traditionally, if somewhat unoriginally, associated with the Great God Pan. In classical mythology Pan represented those wild and unpredictable impulses which take hold of us without warning and deafen us to the voice of reason. Aleister Crowley had a special liking for the horned and shaggy goat-man and his famous 'Hymn to Pan' was included in the service which preceded his cremation.

[16](#) K. Preisendari, *Papyri Graecae Magicae* (Leipzig, 1928-31), vol. I, p. 91. Author's translation.



PART II

Magical Practice

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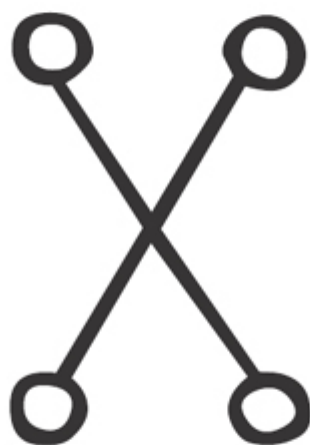
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THE PREPARATION

The next two chapters are intended to give you your first taste of practical magic. Afterwards we shall go on to study other ways of putting your magical knowledge to efficient use. I am afraid that after all the theorizing in the earlier part of this book, it may come as an anticlimax to find yourself now having to mess about with planets, zodiacal signs and other astrological trivia. The terminology of magic is unfortunate, but most of it is used only because no one has yet taken the trouble to invent anything better. What you should bear in mind is that behind the slightly shop-soiled nomenclature there hides a reality as vital, fresh and relevant today as it was at the beginning of time. That is, if time ever had a beginning.

Another problem is that the rituals given below, though properly belonging to high magic, are pretty elementary stuff. I do not want to sound like a salesman who declines at the last minute to deliver the goods, but there is no point in setting you advanced tasks at this stage. Such work demands a great deal of experience and understanding. Magic, like playing the violin, is something you have to work at; unless you learn first to cope with the scales and simple pieces, you will never tackle the great sonatas. Even so, you may be assured that there is enough here to keep you happy, certainly more than usually finds its way into print.

THE INTENTION AND THE CORRESPONDENCES

Earlier we saw that magic was a means of effecting changes in conformity with the will. The first step is to work out what sort of changes you wish to effect. To assist you in this respect a special Table of Intentions has been drawn up (pp. 130–132). This lists a series of possible motives for wanting to use magic and then, in the second column, tells you what category of rite is appropriate. For convenience these rites are classified under various planetary names. When consulting the table you should also make note of any supplementary remarks and of the number found in the third column, although the significance of this will not emerge until later.

The next step is to examine the three Tables of Correspondences (pp. 132–134). These are your key to the mysteries, for here at your fingertips you have a comprehensive exposition of occult symbolism. You will observe that the first column of each table reproduces the planetary classifications found in the Table of Intentions. Once you have identified whichever of these you want, you have only to read across the other columns to discover the hermetic correspondences. These, or as many of them as possible, must then be incorporated in the master ritual which is given on pp. 161 and which supplies all the ingredients needed to give your ritual that sacramental quality we discussed in the previous chapter. For good measure there are also two tables of zodiacal correspondences (pp. 137, 138), which list the associations pertinent to each of the twelve signs of the zodiac. These will come in useful when you start experimenting with your own ritual construction.

Intentions

Table of Intentions

Intention	Rite	Degree	Remarks
Ambition, general	Jupiter	2	
Astral World, travel in	Moon	1	See also Chapter 8
knowledge of	Saturn	2	
Beauty, to enhance/acquire	Venus	1	See also Chapter 12
Business, success in	Mercury	1 or 2	Burn an incense of benzoin resin (<i>Styrax tonkinensis</i>) and cinnamon (<i>Cinnamomum cassia</i> or <i>verum</i>)
Career, success in	Jupiter	1 or 2	
Commerce, success in	Mercury	1 or 2	
Discord, to sow	Mars	2	Perform when Moon is waning
Examination, to study for	Saturn	2	An incense of cinnamon (<i>Cinnamomum cassia</i> or <i>verum</i>), and either mace (<i>Myristica fragrans</i>) or mastic (<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>) is conducive to study
Examination, to succeed in	Mercury	2	
Friendship, to disrupt	Mars	2	Perform when Moon is waning
Friendship, to foster	Venus or Sun	2	
Friendship, to secure	Jupiter or Sun	2	
Future, to discern	Mercury	1	See also Chapter 10
Health, to obtain	Jupiter or Sun	2	See also Chapter 12
Harmony, to promote	Sun	2	
Home and related domestic matters	Saturn	2	A new house or home may be fumigated with an incense of camphor, myrtle (<i>Myrtus communis</i>) and either nutmeg (<i>Myristica fragrans</i>) or aloes wood (gen. <i>Aquilaria</i>). The home comes under the astrological sign of Virgo.

Honours, to attract worldly honours	Jupiter	2	Special incense of benzoin resin (<i>Styrax tonkinensis</i>) or, by way of substitute, storax/styrax (<i>Liquidambar orientalis</i>), pepperwort, cloves and aloes/agarwood/oudh (gen. <i>Aquilaria</i>)
Influence, to influence people	Mercury	2	
Journey, to ensure a good or safe journey	Moon or Mercury	2	
Knowledge, esoteric	Saturn	1	See also Robert Fludd, in Appendix 3
Love, to obtain	Venus	1	See also Chapter 12
Luck, to obtain	Sun or Jupiter	2	See also Chapter 9
Lust, to gratify	Venus	1	
Military success	Mars	1 or 2	
Money, to acquire	Sun	2	
Patronage, to obtain	Sun	2	
Peace, to create	Sun	1 or 2	
Pleasure, to ensure	Venus	2	
Property/possessions, to recover lost	Sun	2	
Property/possessions, to increase	Venus	2	
Reconciliation, to achieve	Moon	2	
Theatre (and the arts generally), success in	Mercury or Sun	2	
Travel, safety in	Moon	2	
War, to prevent	Sun or Moon	1	
War, to cause	Mars	1	Perform when Moon is waning
Wealth, to obtain	Jupiter	2	
Youth, to regain	Sun	1	See also Chapter 12

Correspondences

This first table consists mainly of the physical details which you will bring into your ritual in order to link your subconscious with the astral world.

Table of Correspondences
Table 1

Planet	Colour	Plant	Metal	Gem ¹	Perfumes ²
Sun	Orange	Sunflower, heliotrope, chicory	Gold	Topaz, diamond	Aloes/agarwood/oudh (gen. Aquilaria), saffron, cinnamon (Cinnamomum cassia or verum), citrus, myrrh (Commiphora myrrha), cloves, rosemary, chamomile
Moon	Violet	Hazel, almond, peony	Silver	Crystal, pearl, quartz	Camphor (Cinnamomum camphora), jasmine, frankincense, white sandalwood (Santalum album), orris root (Iris germanica), violet
Mercury	Yellow	Vervain, palm, cinquefoil	Quicksilver (mercury/Hg)	Agate, opal	Cinnamon (Cinnamomum cassia or verum), mace/nutmeg (Myristica fragrans), cloves, narcissus, storax/styrax ³ (Liquidambar orientalis), galangal (alternative: ginger)
Venus	Emerald green	Rose myrtle fennel vervain, maidenhair	Copper	Emerald, turquoise	Ambergris, ² musk ² (or, by way of substitute, musk seed: Hibiscus moschatus), benzoin resin (Styrax tonkinensis), pink rose, wild rose (Rosa acicularis or Rosa canina), myrtle (Myrtus communis)
Mars	Scarlet	Absinth, rue, lamb's tongue	Iron	Ruby	Benzoin resin (Styrax tonkinensis), tobacco (macerated nicotiana tabacum), galangal or ginger, pepperwort ³
Jupiter	Blue	Narcissus, oak, poplar, agrimony	Tin	Amethyst, sapphire	Nutmeg, cinnamon (Cinnamomum cassia or verum), cloves (Syzygium aromaticum), aloes/agarwood/oudh (gen: Aquilaria), lemon balm (Melissa officinalis)

<i>Table of Correspondences</i> <i>Table 1</i>					
Planet	Colour	Plant	Metal	Gem¹	Perfumes²
Saturn	Indigo	Ash, yew, cypress, houseleek	Lead	Onyx, sapphire	Civet, musk ² (or, by way of substitute, musk seed: <i>Hibiscus moschatus</i>), vetiver (<i>Chrysopogon zizani- oides</i>), patchouli

<i>Table of Correspondences</i> <i>Table 2</i>		
Element	Colour	Plant
Earth	Russet, green	Red poppy, thrift, vetiver, mosses and lichens
Fire	Orange, scarlet	Nettle, thistle, hibiscus, basil
Air	Pale yellow	Aspen, pine, mistletoe, white clover, yarrow
Water	Deep blue	All water plants, even seaweeds

Tables 2 and 3

These tables supply further information and list those things you will have to visualize during the course of your ritual. You will recollect that a cosmic force is contacted by visualizing its traditional form. In the body of the master ritual you will find instructions telling you when to visualize the appropriate planetary spirits and sefirotic forms. The names of these planetary spirits vary from one magical tradition to the next. The so-called ‘Olympic’ spirits are listed in the following table, with their Kabbalistic relatives shown in brackets.

Again, try not to be put off by the banality of some of the objects listed. There is no need to take them too seriously: it would be a poor magician who saw nothing funny in the lunar goose and astral crocodile solemnly mentioned below.

Table 2

Planet	Associated Greek or Roman God	Symbolic Creature	Olympic Spirit ⁴	Description of Planetary Spirit
Sun	Adonis, Apollo	Lion, Sparrow-hawk	Och (Sorath)	A king holding a sceptre, a cockerel, a roaring lion
Moon	Diana ⁵	Dog	Phul (Schael)	An archer astride a doe, a goose, a huntress with bow and arrow
Mercury	Hermes, Mercury	Swallow, ibis, ape	Ophiel (Taph-thar-tharath)	A king astride a bear, a handsome youth, a magpie, a dog
Venus	Aphrodite, Venus	Dove, sparrow, swan	Hagith (Kedemiel)	Young girls, a dove, a camel
Mars	Ares, Mars	Horse, wolf, bear	Phaleg (Bartzabel)	Man dressed in armour, a king astride a lion with a severed head in one hand and an unsheathed sword in the other, a stag, a horse
Jupiter	Poseidon, Zeus, Jupiter	Eagle	Bethor (Hismael)	Eagle, lion, dragon, bull, peacock, sword
Saturn	Cybele, Rhea, Persephone	Crocodile	Aratron (Zazel)	Bearded king riding a dragon, elderly bearded man, crow, dragon, people clad in black
Element		Elemental King		
Earth	—	—	Gheb/Ghobe	—
Fire	—	Lion	Djin	—
Air	—	Man, eagle	Paralda	—
Water	—	Snake, scorpion	Necksa/Nicksa	—

<i>Table 3</i>					
Planet	Sefira	Symbolic Creature	Sefirothic Form	Archangel	Guardian Angels
Sun	Tifareth	Lion, child, phoenix	A king, a sacrificial god, an infant	Raphael	Shinanim
Moon	Yesod	Elephant	A handsome nude man	Gabriel	Ishim
Mercury	Hod	Two snakes	A hermaphrodite	Michael	Benei Elohim
Venus	Netsah	Lynx	A beautiful nude woman	Haniel	Tarshishim
Mars	Geburah	Basilisk	A warrior driving a chariot	Chamuel	Seraphim
Jupiter	Hesed	Unicorn	A king seated on a throne, merciful and conciliatory	Zadkiel (closely associated with the colours mauve or purple)	Chasmalim
Saturn	Binah	Woman	A mature woman	Zaphael	Aralim/Erelim
Earth	Malkuth	Sphinx	A young woman, crowned and sitting on a throne	Sandalphon	Cherubim
—	Kether	—	A venerable bearded king in profile	Metatron (identified with the transfigured Enoch: see Genesis v: 22-29)	Holy living creatures
—	Hokmah	Man	A bearded man	Ratzel	Auphanim

Zodiacal Tables⁶

These tables are mainly for reference, but with experience you will be able to enrich your ritual with some of the correspondences listed in them.

Table 4

Sign	Metal	Gem	Colour	Plant
Aries	Iron	Ruby, red jasper	Scarlet	Geranium, sage
Taurus	Copper	Topaz, emerald	Red, orange	Mallow, vervain, clover
Gemini	Quicksilver/ mercury	Alexandrite, onyx	Orange	Orchid, gladiolus
Cancer	Silver	Emerald, turquoise	Amber	Lotus, comfrey, borage
Leo	Gold	Opal, zircon	Greenish yellow	Sunflower, cyclamen, dog/oxeye daisy
Virgo	Quicksilver/ mercury	Diamond, chrysolite	Yellowish green	Snowdrop, lily, narcissus
Libra	Copper	Chrysolite, jade	Emerald green	Aloe, marjoram
Scorpio	Iron	Cornelian, malachite	Greenish blue	Cactus, houndstongue
Sagittarius	Tin	Carbuncle/red garnet, sapphire	Blue	Rush, pimpernel
Capricorn	Lead	Black opal, tourmaline	Indigo	Thistle, sorrel
Aquarius ⁷	Lead	Aquamarine, lapis lazuli	Violet	Wormwood (Artemisia absinthium), fennel, buttercup
Pisces ⁷	Tin	Pearl, amethyst	Crimson	Opium (Papaver somniferum), birthwort (Aristolochia)

Table 5

Special attention should be paid to the details given in the third and fourth columns which are important if your ritual intention is to promote good health or cure disease. The optimum time to perform such a rite is when the Sun, Jupiter or the ruling planet of the patient's natal sign is in the sign that rules that part of the body in which you are interested. Thus a ritual to cure impotence would take place when the Sun, Jupiter or the victim's ruling planet was in Scorpio. The plant on your altar would be a cactus (an alternative to the Jupiterian plants which would normally be used), and the main Jupiterian colour (violet) would be joined by the

Scorpion shade of greenish blue. Always use your initiative to include as many correspondences as possible in your ritual work.

Table 5

Sign	Symbolic Creature	Part of Body	Bodily System	Harmonious Signs for Business, Partnerships, Marriage
Aries	Ram, owl	Head, brain, eyes, face	Cerebral	Sagittarius, Leo
Taurus	Bull	Neck, throat, lower jaw, tongue, ears	—	Capricorn, Virgo, Cancer
Gemini	Magpie, hybrids of all kinds	Hands, arms, lungs,	Nervous, Pulmonary	Aquarius, Libra
Cancer	Crab, turtle	Breast, stomach, womb, pancreas	Digestive	Pisces, Scorpio, Taurus
Leo	Lion	Heart, spine, spleen, arms, wrists	Cardiac	Sagittarius, Aries
Virgo	Virgin, anchorite	Abdomen, hands, intestines, sympathetic nervous system	Alimentary	Capricorn, Taurus
Libra	Elephant, tortoise	Lower back, kidneys, adrenal glands	Renal	Aquarius, Gemini
Scorpio	Scorpion, wolf, turtle, lobster	Liver, bladder, pelvis, genitals, prostate	Generative	Cancer, Pisces
Sagittarius	Centaur, dog, horse	Hips, thighs, liver	Hepatic	Aries, Leo
Capricorn	Goat, donkey	Knees, bones, joints, skin	Bony	Taurus, Virgo, Libra
Aquarius	Eagle, peacock, paradigmatic man	Ankles, shins, veins and arteries	Circulatory	Libra, Gemini, Aries
Pisces	Fish, dolphin, porpoise	Feet, immune system	Lymphatic, Hepatic	Cancer, Scorpio, Virgo

THE TIME

So far all you have done is note what type of ritual you need and which set of correspondences it involves. Before you go any further you will want to ascertain whether the time is right for its performance.

The Tattvic Tides

The most propitious seasons for magical work are often said to be spring and summer, but this need not preclude such work during autumn and winter even if, as some people claim, a little more effort may be needed. Spring and summer are traditionally favoured because the correct Tattvic tides are then believed to be flowing. Five, possibly seven, or even more in number, the Tattvas, meaning ‘principle’ or ‘reality’, are held by Hindus, Buddhists and Jains to be the elements that constitute objective reality. (They appear to be similar to what the Pythagoreans and, after them, Plato called στοιχεῖα or ‘principles’). The incidence of the cosmic currents they produce, an idea popularised by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (See [Appendix 3](#); Mathers), is held to coincide with the solstices and equinoxes. They are set out below, the dates given being relevant to the northern hemisphere.

1. Prithivi Tattva	December 23rd to March 21st
2. Taijas Tattva	March 21st to June 21st
3. Vayu Tattva	June 21st to September 23rd
4. Apas Tattva	September 23rd to December 23rd

I must admit that I have never taken the Tattvic tides too seriously. More important is the lunar cycle.

The Lunar Cycle

Nowadays there is no universal agreement about the Moon's influence on terrestrial affairs. True, some of the more outlandish claims have been discredited but sceptics have yet to prove their case. The word lunatic, as most people know, was coined by the Romans because of the perceived effect the Moon on the mentally unbalanced, something many contemporary researchers attribute to the influence of the lunar cycle on electromagnetic activity within the brain. A similar correlation has been discovered by scientists studying metabolic changes in both animals and plants.⁸ The latter

may well offer a scientific justification for the old farming tradition that corn planted at a Full Moon is bound to fare badly.⁹ In the nineteen-sixties much was made of research conducted by Professor Piccardi in Florence, suggesting a correlation between the Moon's phases and the rate at which certain chemicals dissolve, though his findings have since been disputed. Add to these examples the Moon's well-known influence on tides and menstrual patterns and one is tempted to suggest that, whatever else they may be, lunar influences are not perhaps all moonshine.

Some modern occultists have attempted to explain the Moon's influence in terms of electro-dynamics, arguing that throughout nature there exists an electrical rhythm which coincides with the Moon's cycle, an impulse akin to the universal force postulated by Madam Blavatsky in her *Secret Doctrine* (see [Appendix 3](#); Blavatsky).

A more poetic tradition suggests to us that the natural world waxes and wanes with the Moon. The appearance of the New Moon is accordingly taken as a sign of renewal, when every living object is able to draw in fresh strength. That trend is reversed once Full Moon has been reached. From then on, the Moon begins to withdraw its strength in order to pour it forth again later, and our own powers are sympathetically depleted. In accordance with this tradition, most—but by no means all—magical work is performed when the Moon is waxing, although ‘black’ magic, with its works of discord and hatred, is more suited to the waning Moon which seems in some way to promote its success. Always remember that any enterprise undertaken when the Sun and Moon are in conjunction is doomed to failure, so keep an eye out for any eclipses predicted in your diary before you start your rituals.

Planetary Exaltations

The lunar cycle is not the only form of celestial guidance available to the conscientious magician. Another is provided by the ancient doctrine that some planets are ‘exalted’ when found in certain signs of the zodiac. In astrological terms this simply means that the principle associated with a particular planet expresses itself more freely when that planet is traversing the zodiacal sign most sympathetic to it. From this magicians have deduced quite sensibly that a ritual is likely to be more successful if its performance coincides with the exaltation of the planet that governs it. Thus a rite of Venus would have its chances of success enhanced considerably if it were performed when Venus was passing through Pisces. Some magicians go on to suggest that if no convenient exaltation is in sight, you should arrange to hold

your ritual while the Sun is occupying whichever sign exalts the ritual planet. On this basis a rite of Venus would take place some time between February 18th and March 21st when the Sun is in Pisces. However, it is unlikely that you will ever find your ritual intentions corresponding so neatly with the zodiacal calendar.

Details of the signs in which different planets are exalted are given below. You will observe that there is also a sign in which the same planets are said to have their ‘fall’, because here their natural self-expression is inhibited. It is something else to be taken into account in timing your ritual. You would, for example, try to avoid performing a rite of Venus when that planet is in Virgo. On the other hand, because it is a great benefic (despite its ‘fall’ in Libra) it would not matter if the Sun were in Libra or anywhere else.

Planet	Exaltation	Fall
Sun	Aries	—
Moon	Taurus	Scorpio
Mercury	Virgo	Pisces
Venus	Pisces	Virgo
Mars	Capricorn	Cancer
Jupiter	Cancer	Capricorn
Saturn	Libra	Aries

Planetary Rulerships

In addition to being exalted in certain signs, planets also enjoy the rulership of others. This astrological doctrine can again be adapted for magical purposes. All you need do is see which sign is ruled by the ritual planet, and then arrange everything for a time when the Sun, or better still the planet itself, is passing through that sign. If we once more take a rite of Venus by way of example, we can see by looking at the list below that it should be performed when Venus is in Libra or Taurus,^{[10](#)} or alternatively when the Sun occupies either of these signs.

Note, however, that in the sign opposite to that which it rules a planet is said to be ‘depressed’ or in its ‘detriment’. Here, as in its ‘fall’, that planet will be unable to express itself powerfully, thereby making your ritual intention slightly harder to realize. Astrologically the Sun has its detriment in Aquarius but this has no bearing on the practice of magic or anything else.

Planet	Rulership	Detriment
Sun	Leo	—
Moon	Cancer	Capricorn
Mercury	Gemini and Virgo	Sagittarius and Pisces
Venus	Libra and Taurus	Aries and Scorpio
Mars	Scorpio and Aries	Taurus and Libra
Jupiter	Sagittarius and Pisces	Gemini and Virgo
Saturn	Capricorn and Aquarius	Cancer and Leo
Uranus	Aquarius	Leo
Neptune	Pisces	Virgo
Pluto	Scorpio	Taurus

You will observe that this list affords you slightly more scope than the previous one, but once again you need not throw in your hand if the heavens still refuse to arrange themselves to match your purpose. Most rituals are intended to meet immediate needs and so leave little opportunity for lengthy preparation. The best thing to do in these circumstances is to see whether there is a time that is astrologically auspicious in the near future, and if there is, postpone your ritual until then. If you are unable to find such a time, then carry on regardless. When we select a propitious time for the performance of a ritual, our object is to make sure that any shortcomings on our part will be compensated by the planetary influences whose help we have enlisted. Fortunately, should these influences be unobtainable by virtue of exaltations, rulerships and affinities, we can still go some way towards attracting them by selecting the day and/or hour traditionally ruled by the ritual planet.

Planetary Days and Hours

The planetary days are easily memorized, but a little more work is needed to calculate the appropriate hours. Even so, it is not difficult, since all you need do is to look up the hours of sunrise and sunset for any particular day and then work out for yourself which is the first hour, second hour and so on. The following table will then tell you which planet rules each of these hours.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Planetary Ruler</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Moon</i>	<i>Mars</i>	<i>Mercury</i>	<i>Jupiter</i>	<i>Venus</i>	<i>Saturn</i>
<i>Sunrise</i>							
<i>1st hour</i>	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
<i>2nd hour</i>	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
<i>3rd hour</i>	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars
<i>4th hour</i>	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
<i>5th hour</i>	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
<i>6th hour</i>	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
<i>7th hour</i>	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon

Repeat the series for those hours still remaining until sunset.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Planetary Ruler</i>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Moon</i>	<i>Mars</i>	<i>Mercury</i>	<i>Jupiter</i>	<i>Venus</i>	<i>Saturn</i>
<i>Sunset</i>							
<i>1st hour</i>	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
<i>2nd hour</i>	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon
<i>3rd hour</i>	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
<i>4th hour</i>	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
<i>5th hour</i>	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars
<i>6th hour</i>	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
<i>7th hour</i>	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus

Repeat the series for those hours still remaining until sunrise.

Having explained how to time your ritual to the best advantage, we can now proceed to consider what further preparatory work is required. It is intended as much to put you in the right frame of mind as to promote any marvels per se.

THE PLACE

The preparation of the place involves assembling all the materials in the room where the rite is to be performed. The walls should be adorned with drapery of whatever color has been recommended in the Tables of Correspondences, but if such extravagance is beyond your means, a cloth of the correct shade covering the altar will be sufficient. The altar itself may consist of an ordinary table or chest, but it must be large enough to accommodate the necessary ritual implements. If you take your magic seriously you will sooner or later have to construct a proper altar of your own or have one made to suit your individual requirements. Contemporary magicians seem to have a penchant for cube-shaped altars painted black inside and white without, these colours representing empirical and non-empirical reality. Such altars are a recent invention and their use is a matter of taste.

We shall assume that you have already cleared all furniture from the centre of the room so as to provide ample space for the circle in which you will be working. With an ordinary compass you must now locate, if you don't know them already, the four cardinal points and place on the floor the symbols of the elemental rulers that govern them. These are:

North—This is the station of Earth (♁), and within the Kabbalistic system it is ruled by Uriel. Its symbol may be a rock, a handful of sand or just a clod of earth. Whichever of these you select, it is an advantage to obtain it from a sacred site, ideally one connected with the Ancient Mysteries.¹¹ However, it is not always possible to cart back buckets of soil from Delphi or Eleusis, and it would be sheer vandalism to start chipping bits off the Great Pyramid or the boulders at Stonehenge. I know of one magician who swears by a small rock he lifted from a cromlech in north Wales, while another regularly uses soil from a dolmen in Brittany. Until you have an opportunity of getting something on these lines yourself, you must make do with the best you can. Anything gathered from the spot where two paths cross is said to be particularly effective, and that should not be too hard to manage.

South—The station of Fire (♂) is ruled by Michael, and a candle or votive light will be perfectly adequate here. If you are determined to do things in style, you can purchase a beeswax candle from any church-

supply shop. In Chinese magic red jade was traditionally the symbol of fire.

East—Here we have the station of Water (▽) which is ruled by Gabriel. A glass of consecrated water is required. To perform the consecration you need only add a pinch of salt, the emblem of eternity, to a glass of rain or spring water. While making the sign of the pentagram over it, say aloud: I exorcise Thee, O Creature of Water. There is a far lengthier incantation in Latin, if you prefer it. It goes like this:

*Te exorcizo per Dei omnipotentis virtutem qui regnat per saecula saeculorum. In nominibus Mertalliae, Musaliae, Dophaliae, Nemaliae, Zitanseiae, Goldaphairae, Dedulsairae, Gheninaireae, Geogropheirae, Cedahi, Gilthar, Godieth, Ezoliel, Musil, Grassil, Tamen, Puri, Godu, Hoznoth, Astaroth, Tzabaoth, Adonai, Agla, On, El, Tetragrammaton, Shema, Ariston, Anaphaxeton, Segilaton, Primeuraton, Amen.*¹²

Frankly, if I were you, I wouldn't bother.

West—The last station belongs to Raphael, who rules Air. The object generally used to represent that element is a sprig of mistletoe, appropriate because of its druidic connection with the Sun, itself a symbol of Raphael. A card bearing one of the esoteric symbols of Air (△)(○) or the Sun's astrological symbol (☉) will do as an alternative if you perversely decide to embark on your magical career when mistletoe berries are hard to come by.

The Circle

The circle on whose periphery the elemental symbols are placed may be drawn in chalk, or as Eliphas Lévi (see [Appendix 3](#)) recommended, made of strips of doeskin. Less trouble is a circle formed with string or cotton. It is important that the two ends be left undone until the magician is ready to step into the circle. Once inside he can then tie up the ends and so 'close' the circle. Still less trouble is a circle that is visualized by the magician but has no physical existence. In the early days, however, it is far wiser, not to mention more reassuring, to have something tangible around you. There is a cautionary tale involving Aleister Crowley and his chela or disciple, the poet Victor Neuburg, who on 6 November 1909 decided to summon up the demon Choronzon in the Sahara Desert. While Neuburg was momentarily

distracted, the fiend kicked sand over part of the circle they'd prudently drawn, leapt inside and went for the young man's throat with its 'froth-covered fangs'.

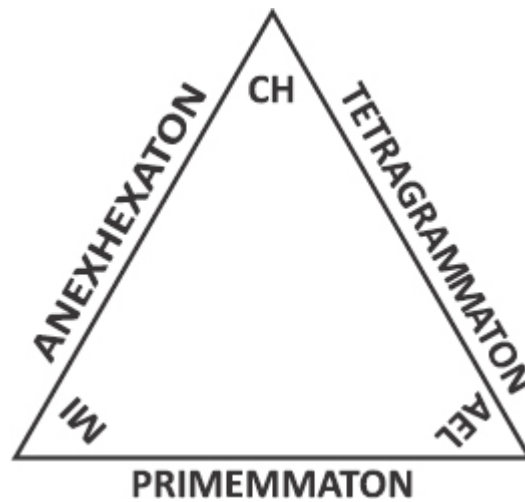
Oddly enough the circle is scarcely mentioned in any of the extant Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri (c. 2C BC–5C AD). Instead the magician is told to depend for protection on amulets worn on his person. On the whole, I think a circle may be safer than a battery of charms and talismans, and far more reassuring. That said, do remember Neuburg's misadventure and stay off the beach.

In many *grimoires* the magician is urged to reinforce his circle by writing various names of power along its circumference. If you feel nervous you may care to do this, although in my opinion it is unnecessary except in some highly advanced and dangerous operations which do not concern us here. These names are mostly culled from the various forms of the Tetragrammaton and should be written in chalk on the ground, or more conveniently perhaps, on cards which can then be placed at strategic points along the inner edge of the circle. Three favourite names for this purpose are Shaddai El Chai and Tetragrammaton, both of which reconcile the human and the divine, and Ararita, a notarikon—see page 57 (footnote)—which implies the unity and uniqueness, of God.

The Triangle of Art

This is a triangle delineated at the eastern point outside the magic circle. Its chief purpose is to confine any elemental or angelic being that has been conjured to visible appearance. It is extremely unlikely that you will be troubled by a physical visitation of this nature, but to be on the safe side it is as well to make up the triangle before you commence any magical operation. It has the added advantage of providing a convenient focus for your visualization; any astral form that manifests itself will then be psychically observable within the triangle and nowhere else. Like the circle, the triangle may be delineated with chalk, string or cotton. If however, there is reason to suspect that the force you wish to contact may be boisterous, like that involved in a rite of Mars, or if you persist in pursuing the 'klippothic'¹³ aspect of a force, then take the precaution of tracing a *second* triangle in salt within the first as this will reinforce the barrier. It is said that the Chinese used to form the second triangle out of scarlet peony petals since that flower was believed to keep demons in

thrall.¹⁴ Once again, words of power may be written or placed along the sides of the triangle as in the following example.



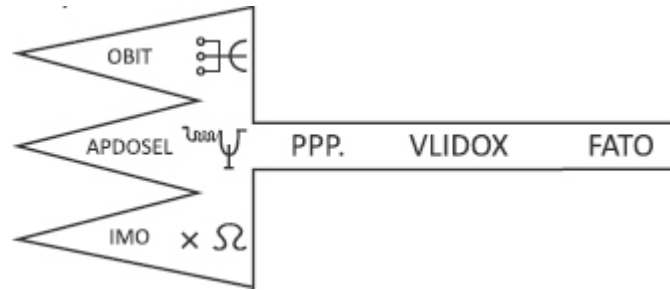
The Triangle of Art
Figure 2

The Altar

This is situated inside the circle and faces due east, whence all light comes. In magic with a nefarious or klippothic purpose the altar faces north,¹⁵ with north and east exchanging places throughout the remainder of the ritual. On top of the altar will rest a cloth of appropriate ritual colour, and some of the following *objects de magie*.

The Ritual Sword

The true magical sword is a rare and costly item. Those that do turn up from time to time are made of various planetary metals, or for general purposes of tempered steel. On them are inscribed or painted an assortment of names and words of power. If you opt to make do with an ordinary sword or large knife, then you can adapt it for magical use by having engraved or painted on the blade whatever names of power you fancy. Some magicians favour replicas of the Trident ([figure 3](#)), described by Paracelsus in his *Archidoxes Magicae*—posthumously published in 1569—and a big favourite of Eliphas Lévi (see [Appendix 3](#)), who waxes lyrical about its virtues in his *History of Magic* (1860). Paracelsus recommended it should be made ‘on the day of Venus and at the hour of Saturn’.



The Trident of Paracelsus
Figure 3

The Wand

The wand has been said to perform much the same function as a wireless aerial, serving to conduct etheric vibrations on to the plane of dense matter. Although itself a part of the physical world it is capable of reaching out and arresting the supra-physical forces that charge the air around it. Traditionally the wand, like that used by water diviners, is made of a hazel branch cut from the parent tree with one stroke of the knife in spring or summer. The tips of the wand may then be stopped with metal caps similar to the ferrules of walking-sticks. These should ideally be of the appropriate ritual metal, but lead is generally held to be a satisfactory alternative. When not in use the wand should be wrapped in a silk cloth of any colour save brown or black.

I have seen wands made of other woods besides hazel. Almond is one of them, while ash seems to be a favourite in Scandinavian countries, where it is identified with Yggdrasil, the fabulous tree that binds together heaven, earth and hell. Oak, too, is used by magicians, possibly because of its druidic connections. According to Celtic tradition, the branch should be cut when the tree is about to burst into leaf.

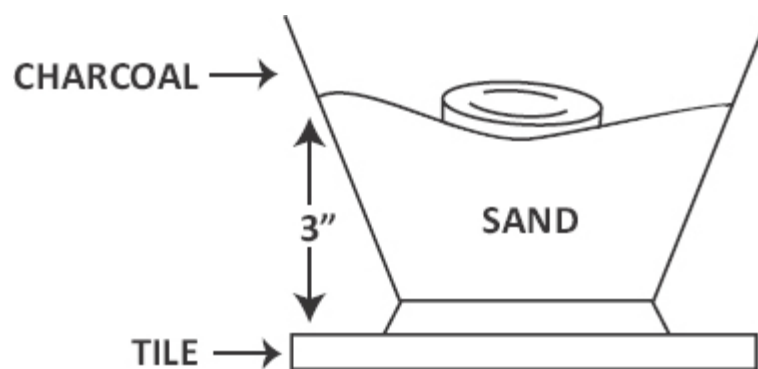
The Incense Burner

In an earlier chapter we briefly discussed the psychological value of incense. It has an additional purpose. There is a magical tradition that incense enables 'spirits' to assume tangible form. In the nineteen-twenties when 'Stella C.' (Stella Cranshaw) was delighting Harry Price, founder of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research, with her physical mediumship, Price reported that the phenomena came thick and fast

whenever incense was burned. That said, Harry Price was not always the most truthful of witnesses.

Nowadays incense burners can be purchased quite cheaply, but purists like to make their own. All you need for this is a small bowl and a tile or piece of asbestos substitute upon which to rest it. If possible the bowl should be of the metal shown in the Table of Correspondences, but this is not always practicable. You will not, for example, want to be distracted in the middle of a solemn Saturnine ritual by the sight of your leaden incense burner slowly melting away. Earthenware bowls will serve quite adequately, and no one's resources are likely to be strained in getting hold of an old flower-pot.

Whatever bowl you decide to use, it should be filled with sand or shingle to a depth of some three inches. On top of this place some pieces of charcoal, taking care to leave the surface uneven so air can circulate underneath ([figure 4](#)). To start things off, simply sprinkle a few drops of spirit on the charcoal and apply a lighted match. It will then burn for a few minutes with a blue flame before settling down to smoulder with a red-hot glow. A little incense scattered on these embers will give off aromatic vapours as it burns. Easier to cope with are sticks of incense which can be stood in the sand and allowed to burn away, though the type of incense you need may not always be available in stick form. Happily, suppliers of incense and other esoteric paraphernalia are plentiful nowadays so you should be able to get whatever you need quite easily.



The Incense Burner
Figure 4

The Correspondence Chart

Until you are completely familiar with the correspondences, it is prudent to keep near you a card on which they have been copied. This can be referred to as the need arises. Where colours are mentioned, you will find it helpful to have these painted on the card instead of being written out by name.

The Tree of Life

A copy of the *Etz Chaim*, suitably coloured,¹⁶ should also be on hand for easy reference. Once you are at work inside the circle you will be unable to step outside it to consult a textbook whenever memory fails you.

The Ritual Card

This is the programme of your ritual, and until you are fully proficient, the occasional glance will remind you what is to be done next. To prepare your card, copy out the master ritual and expand this wherever necessary by adding supplementary details gathered from the Table of Correspondences and elsewhere.

The Pentacle

The so-called Seal of Solomon is reputed to make a profound impression on such disembodied creatures as the elemental spirits. Purists maintain that the pentagram or five-pointed star becomes a pentacle only when enclosed within a circle, though in this book both terms are used interchangeably. You may either fashion one out of wood or draw one on a stiff white card, both of which should stand upright. Keep the pentacle covered by a cloth of coloured, but not black, silk until such time as you need to use it. There exist graphic accounts of how magicians have warded off demons by waving pentacles before them just as a lion-tamer might wave his whip under the nose of his charges. In some circles an inverted pentacle—viewed as the triumph of matter over spirit—is held to be inauspicious, though Aleister Crowley quite sensibly discerned in it the descent of spirit into matter, and accordingly deemed it benign.

The Gong or Gavel

In the rituals provided you will find the adept is frequently instructed to strike a gong or gavel a certain number of times. This is done for two

reasons. The first is simply to keep the celebrant's mind on the job, since during ritual work it is all too easy to drift off into a dreamy state which is both unproductive and potentially dangerous. A few timely knocks will prevent this. The second reason is that the knocks are a means of establishing contact with the appropriate astral forces. This can be achieved subjectively by way of the operator's subconscious, or objectively by way of the sonic vibrations generated. In either case it is the *number* of knocks which is of paramount importance, since each series will correspond with a particular plane of suprasensible existence.

The Crystal

This is merely an aid to visualization, and its use is a matter of choice. Some people find it easier to 'project' their images into the crystal, or else they find that an occasional peep will reveal to them the form they have been attempting to visualize. In both cases the phenomenon is subjective. There is nothing physically visible inside the crystal itself.

The Candles

Apart from providing illumination these symbolize the flame of understanding which burns in the magician's heart (v. 2 Esd. xiv 25). They also heighten his awareness of those strange and wonderful things that come not by day but 'By starlight and by candlelight and dreamlight'.^{[17](#)}

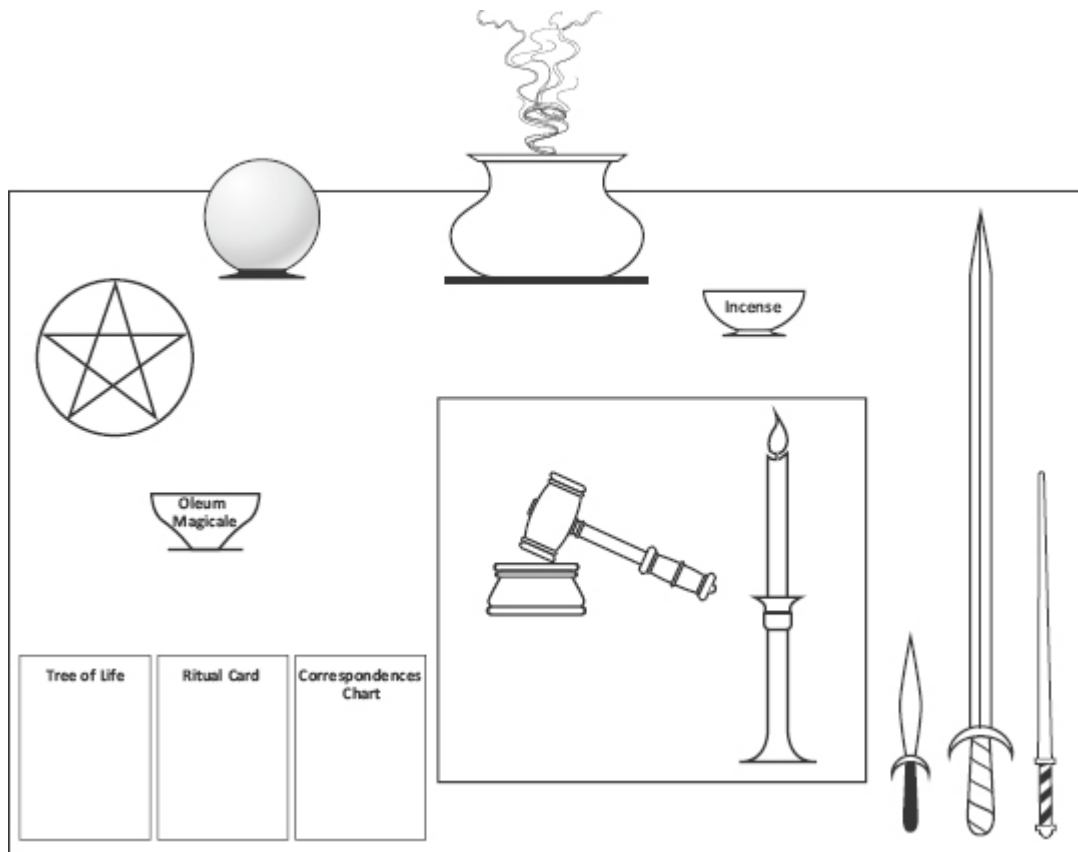
The Sacrificial Knife

Ritual sacrifice is rarely practiced in magic, or at least magicians seldom admit that it is. Some of them, however, lay great store by it, knowing that etheric energy is released whenever blood—'a very special fluid' (*'ein ganz besonderer Saft'*) as Goethe's Mephistopheles points out—is spilled. Dion Fortune (see [Appendix 3](#)) has written that it contains 'a large proportion of ectoplasm...When shed, this ectoplasm rapidly separates from the congealing blood and thus becomes available for materialisations.' In other words, it enables astral forms to assume bodily appearance within the Triangle of Art. My view is that incense is probably just as effective, so whether or not you perform a sacrifice will finally depend on you. I hope you decide against it. If you must indulge in bloodletting, you can always nick your arm with the sacrificial knife and

allow your own gore to provide the vital energy you seek. Incidentally, one *grimoire* suggests that by cracking open an egg, the sensitive magician can obtain the same benefits as his more unfeeling brethren get from killing birds or small animals. Possibly, but to me it seems far too culinary. Rather like making an omelet.

The Flowers

It is always agreeable to have a few flowers on the altar, if only to remind you that the beauties of this world can match those of any other. Do not overdo things. It is better to have just one bloom than clutter up the altar with an extravagant bouquet. If they chance to be available, the plants or flowers mentioned in the Table of Correspondences are the ones to get. These will then have a symbolic as well as aesthetic function.



The Altar
Figure 5

The Oleum Magicale

Magical unguents are applied before and sometimes during ritual work. The psychological impact of their distinctive smell is perhaps secondary to the curious effect their application has on the nervous and circulatory systems of the body. Further details of their composition and manufacture will be found in [Appendix I](#).

Other objects may be included if a particular ritual demands them. Those shown in [figure 5](#) are what would usually be found on an altar used in ceremonial magic of the Western/Kabbalistic tradition. You will find, however, that the Egyptian master ritual given on pp. 173 ff. dispenses with several of these objects, although it does substitute others. When everything has been laid out on the altar the adept may, if he wishes, consecrate it by reciting the following:

Dolmaley, Lameck, Cadat, Pancia, Velous, Merroe, Lamideck, Caldurech, Anereton, Metatron: Most Pure Angels, be guardians of these instruments, they are needed for many things.

Again, I'd be inclined not to bother.

1 Ideally, the gems used in ritual work are set in the appropriate planetary metal, though gold and silver will do at a pinch. Indeed, if you're really feeling the pinch, then resort to fake or nothing at all.

2 Some of the perfumes listed are incenses, others essential oils or distillations. Should you be unable to obtain what is recommended, it is quite permissible to burn Frankincense, obtainable from any ecclesiastical supplier. Since this book first appeared specialist companies, some more reliable than others, advertise their wares on the internet. This makes it far easier to secure precisely what you need. At least two of the scents indicated (ambergris and musk) are no longer naturally sourced, while civet is best avoided on animal welfare grounds. Synthetic alternatives are permissible and not difficult to obtain. Indeed recourse can even be had to branded products if the recommended scents predominate. *Noir de Mars* by Scent on Canvas, for example, contains, *inter alia*, agarwood, myrrh, and base notes of amber, while few scents are more “saturnine” than Robert Piguet's *Bandit* or Balmain's original (but now, alas, reformulated) *Vent Vert*. An invaluable source of information is *Perfumes: the A to Z Guide* by Luca Turin and Tania Sanchez (Penguin: London and New York, 2009).

3 There is no universal agreement on which plants are governed by (or sympathetic to) particular signs or planets. The Renaissance astrologer William Lilly (1602-81), for example, links storax to the Sun, while his contemporary, John Gadbury (1627-1704) associates pepperwort with Mars.

4 ‘Planetary Spirit’ is something of a misnomer as, strictly speaking, the entities named ‘inhabit’ the space occupied by each planet and through which it moves. Their function—in turn and for a limited (but variable) period—is to direct human and mundane affairs. They first made their appearance in the *Arbatel de Magia Veterum* (c 1575), translated into English as *The Arbatel of Magic* by Robert Turner in 1655 and falsely presented as part of the (spurious) ‘*Fourth Book*’ of Cornelius Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosophia*. Commonly known as Olympian Spirits, they are linked to the seven deities held by the ancient Greeks to dwell on Mount Olympus. More closely linked to the planets themselves are the entities listed in brackets, popularly endowed with a bad reputation because often

evoked in rituals with a malefic purpose. That is not to suggest, however, that they themselves are inherently evil, even if Rudolf Steiner got terribly fussed about them. For him Sorath was none other than the Sun Demon, his number 666, who is described in the Book of Revelation. (Aleister Crowley took a different view of him, even adding an 'e' to his forename to convert its numerical equivalent to 666.) See Rudolf Steiner, *The Spiritual Beings in the Heavenly Bodies and in the Kingdoms of Nature*, Steiner Book Centre 1981.

5 In Classical mythology the Moon is linked to Diana only when visible in the sky. Before it rises and after it sets, Hecate is its goddess. Selene and her Roman equivalent Luna likewise represent the Moon, which at other times is linked to Phoebe and Astarte. Many occultists have a special fondness for Isis, wife of Osiris and mother of Horus, similarly associated with the moon, as indeed were Thoth and Khonsu, a reminder that lunar deities are as often male as female.

6 Given that the basis of Hermetic theory is the 'as above, so below' principle of the Emerald Tablet, and that all things in Nature, as quantum physics acknowledges, are interdependent, their behaviour 'decided' by our observation of them, we can spare ourselves the task of mounting a defence of astrology. Readers will find more on this topic in the present writer's Foreword to Peter Stockinger's intriguing book, *Stars and Stones: an astro-magical lapidary* (Mandrake Press, Oxford, 2015).

7 The system had long perfected before the discovery of Uranus (1781) and Neptune (1846). By general consent these planets have an affinity with Aquarius and Pisces respectively, so uranium and neptunium are often put forward as metals sympathetic with these signs. To the chagrin of everyone, a further planet, Pluto, was discovered in 1930 and has since been assigned to Scorpio, thus making plutonium an alternative metal to the traditional iron of that sign. Some astrologers already take note of Chiron (1977), a minor planet on the outer reaches of our solar system but none, so far as I know, has yet examined the significance of other new planets, among them a Planet X beyond Neptune and two dwarf planets, equally remote, named Sedna and 2102VP113.

8 For details of research in this field see Michel Gauquelin, *Astrology and Science* (Peter Davies, London, 1969).

9 For those interested, lettuces should be planted under the new Moon when they will grow to be full and tender, potatoes dug when the Moon is waning, and fruit picked only when the Moon is waxing. The Moon-conscious gardener will also take care to plant flower seeds during the Moon's first quarter and, for extra fragrance, when the Moon is in Libra. He will know too that cucumbers fare best if planted when the Moon is in Scorpio and waxing. Fishermen, incidentally, would do well to bear in mind that bigger catches are likely immediately after the Full Moon or, better still, when the Moon is in either Pisces or Cancer. Bio-dynamic agriculture, inspired by the reflections of Rudolf Steiner (see [Appendix 3](#)) takes all this into account and a great deal more besides. Many of his recommendations seem quaintly eccentric yet, to the consternation of sceptics, the results obtained are impressive.

10 Readers familiar with astrology may care to know that the results secured by ritual will often differ subtly according to the actual sign adopted. The consequences of a Venusian rite may thus express themselves in either Libran terms (i.e. harmoniously) or Taurean terms (i.e. possessively). This is a field which merits further investigation.

11 The adept will have a special affection for places revered by his ancestors. Again and again he will be drawn to them, since they are his point of contact with his archetypal heritage and the esoteric tradition it has nurtured. For their part the unseen guardians of these sites will welcome his interest after centuries of neglect and desuetude. At the same time he can attune his mind to the Akashic memory of the mysteries formerly enacted there. A pilgrimage to one of these sites, if accompanied by a suitable act of devotion to the spirit guardian of the place (*genius loci*), will bestow great blessings on one's magical endeavours.

[12](#) Readers will recognise the divine synonyms among these barbarous names. If the water is to be used for washing, the magician has to invoke another batch of angels and demons: Imanael, Arnamon, Imato, Memeon, Vaphoion, Gardon, Existon, Zgverium, Zarmesiton, Tilecon and Tixmion. Even if there is no discarnate being to claim every one of these names, their mere recitation is deemed useful since it produces acoustic vibrations which astrally charge the salt-water solution. The psychological impact on the magician's mind is perhaps more important.

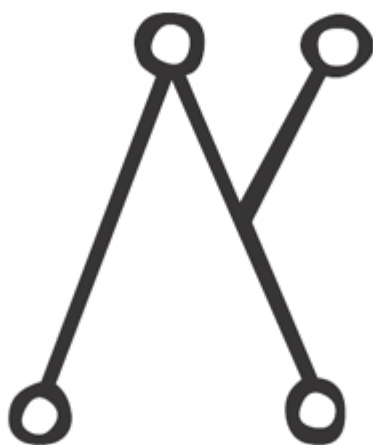
[13](#) The reality that magic deals with, conditioned and unconditioned alike, is both one and many, being as much the whole in each of its parts as those parts within the whole. Every force we encounter thus contains something of its opposite, an alternative, albeit implicit, mode of manifestation. When one such aspect becomes separated from the other, that force is deemed 'klippothic' or unbalanced. The epithet derives from the Hebrew word for 'shell' or 'husk', one theory being that klippothic forces are the impaired remnants of a universe that preceded our own, a kind of cosmic debris now attached to the Tree of Life. Another view, one that owes much to Neoplatonism, is that when the creative impulse streamed forth from the Godhead, it gradually diminished as it passed through each of the sefirot in turn. The klippoth were a product of the instability- or lack of equilibrium- that briefly prevailed before its final extinction.

[14](#) This may be why Theophrastus assures us in his *Enquiry into Plants* that peonies gathered by night are a certain cure for epilepsy. In traditional herbalism the macerated root of peonies is used to cure gout, while traditional Chinese medicine regards it as an effective analgesic.

[15](#) Cf. Jer.i 14: 'Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.' Traditionally the east is the side of God, the west that of man, the south that of good spirits and north that of demons. In Zoroastrianism Angra Mainyu, the Spirit of Destruction, better known in Europe as Ahriman, emerged from the regions of the north, a point worth noting since Mme Blavatsky, discussing the Persian tradition in her *Secret Doctrine*, describes the north as the provenance of 'every benefic (astral and cosmic) action'. According to some authors, the five infernal kings of the north were Sitrael, Palanthan, Thamaar, Falaur and Sitrami.

[16](#) The sefirothic colours vary slightly according to each plane of manifestation (*atziluth*, *ber'iah*, *yetzirah*, *asiyah*). For present purposes, it is sufficient to use the sefirothic equivalents of the planetary colours listed in the Table of Correspondences. Not mentioned there are *Kether* (brilliant white) and *Hokmah* (slate grey).

[17](#) Herbert Trench, 'She Comes Not When Noon is on the Roses'.



THE MASTER RITUALS

Two master rituals have been provided in this chapter. Both are short and relatively simple. The first, following the most commonly accepted Western magical tradition,¹ is based on the Kabbalah, while the second owes its inspiration to ancient Egypt. It is the Kabbalistic rite which can most conveniently be used with the tables previously given, since both are based on the same esoteric conventions. However, those readers who do not feel at ease in the wonderful, if at times abstruse, world of the sefiroth can quite happily exchange it for the more primitive splendour of the Egyptian rite.

The rituals of magic may generally be divided into three categories, only two of which need concern us here. The third is by far the most advanced and for that reason rarely undertaken on one's own. It demands, above all, a very close rapport with certain astral entities known as Group Forms. These are immensely powerful forces that may on occasion assume human or quasi-human shape and co-operate with other participants in ceremonies extending from the spiritually elevated to the wildest dreams of wantonness. Experience of such rituals, if you are fortunate enough to get it, will not come until you are fully adept² at the other two. I am therefore afraid you will have to contain your patience yet awhile.

The two remaining categories are, for the purpose of this section, referred to as first and second grade rituals. Those of the first grade are only slightly more difficult because, to be fully effective, they demand a little extra preparation. Some venerable textbooks exhort the magician who is about to embark on them to fast, keep chaste, keep silent and let his mind dwell on the ritual intention for several days on end. They then go on to list enough preliminary ablutions and anointings to drive the most dedicated occultist into the ranks of the the Society of Friends.

Unhappily one cannot dispense with all these observances, for no matter how ridiculous some may seem, they do have a psychological effect which will later enhance the magician's performance. Therefore, before all rituals numbered 1 in the Table of Intentions, you are advised to:

1. Keep off sex and solid food for at least six but preferably up to twelve hours.
2. Drink only water for the first six hours and thereafter a glass of wine whenever (but only whenever!) you feel thirsty.
3. Have no sleep during this period.
4. Talk to no one, during the hour immediately preceding the rite, and if possible, keep silent for the full six to twelve hours.
5. Don whatever ritual vestments you intend to wear.^{[3](#)}
6. One hour before the rite is due to begin take a bath, shower, or at the very least, wash your hands. Afterwards, anoint yourself liberally with a magical oil and, if available, one of the scents listed in the Table of Correspondences. This final injunction applies equally to those rituals marked 2 in the Table of Intentions.

You are now ready to put on any ritual jewellery you may have before proceeding to the ritual chamber.

THE KABBALISTIC MASTER RITUAL

Once in the ritual chamber, you should set about preparing the altar, lighting the candles and incense. The cardinal points have then to be located and the elemental symbols placed thereon. Your next task will be to make out the Triangle of Art in the east. When this has been completed, delineate the magic circle itself, leaving a gap to afford you access inside. At last when everything is ready, extinguish all lights except the altar candle and the elemental flame, step inside the circle and immediately close it by knotting or overlapping the two loose ends. The rite is about to begin.

*The Rite*⁴_—

The Purification of the Place

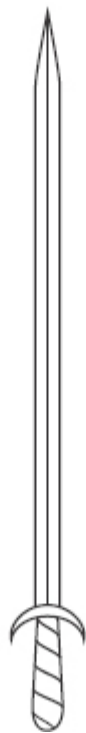
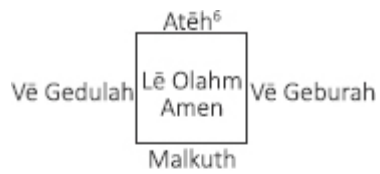
This has become a standard preliminary to Kabbalistic ritual, serving to banish undesirable influences from the environment. The adept begins by facing due east⁵_— and solemnly formulating the Kabbalistic cross.

When this has been completed he remains where he is and uses the ritual sword to trace an astral pentagram in the air before him. There are two ways of going about this, one for the evocation of astral forces, the other for their dismissal. The distinction is of doubtful value and one version only will be given here. For this the adept uses the full sweep of his arm, beginning at the bottom left-hand corner of the pentagram (i.e. from a point somewhere halfway between his left knee and hip) and proceeding to the apex which will be at a point above his head. From here he lowers his sword to the pentagram's lower right-hand corner so that what he has traced is an inverted V. Without pausing he proceeds straight up to the pentagram's top left-hand corner whence he continues horizontally to its right-hand equivalent. Finally he moves the sword down to the bottom left-hand corner from which he began. The progression is shown opposite:

RITUS⁶_—

Purificatio Loci

Regio orientalis



With each movement of the sword he visualizes himself drawing a line of lustrous white light, so that by the time he has finished a gleaming pentagram is suspended over the eastern station. His next task will be to vivify this shape by pointing his sword towards its centre and pronouncing

the word YHVH (Yod-Hē-Vau-Hē). As he utters this most Holy Name, he imagines the pentagram shimmering with newly infused energy.

Australis (south)

Adonai Tzabaoth

Occidens (west)

Eh-Ei-Hē

Borealis (north)

Agla

Before commencing his visualization of the Archangelic Guardians the adept speaks the following words:

Hūc per inanē advoco angelos sanctos terrarum, aerisquē, marisquē et liquidi simul ignīs qui me custōdiant, fōvēant, protegant et defendant in hoc circulo.

The visualized archangels are addressed as follows:

Oriens

Salvē Raphaēl, cuius spiritus est aura ē montibus orta et vestis aurata sicut sōlis lūmina.

Occidens

Salvē Gabriēl, cuius nominē tremunt nymphae subter undas ludentēs

Australis

Salvē Michaēl, quanto splendidior quam ignēs sempiterni est tua majestas.

Borealis

Salvē Uriēl, nam tellus et omnia viva regno tuo pergaudent.

A similar pentagram must then be traced at each of the other cardinal points and charged in every case with the appropriate words given opposite.

The function of these pentagrams is to create astral barriers capable of withstanding assault from any direction. They also form points of contact with the elemental world. For this reason the adept has next to visualize and greet the four elemental kings who will be stationed there. By his visualization he also creates the etheric likeness of these great beings on the periphery of his circle.

Once more the adept begins by turning towards the east, where he visualizes the Archangel Raphael (pronounced Rafaēl, with stress on the final vowel) standing on a purple hilltop, his pale yellow garments billowing in the breeze. Having spoken the words of greeting, he next visualizes behind him, the Archangel Gabriel (Gabriēl) dressed in blue and surrounded by cascading torrents of water. On his right is the figure of Michael (Mikaēl, with the ‘k’ pronounced ‘ch’, as in the Greek letter χ or the Scottish word ‘loch’), clad in scarlet and bearing aloft a red-hot sword. Finally, on his left, he visualizes Uriel (Uriēl), archangel of Earth, standing against a fertile landscape whose greens and browns are the very colours of his cloak.⁷

Australis (south)

Adonai Tzabaoth

Occidens (west)

Eh-Ei-Hē

Borealis (north)

Agla

Before commencing his visualization of the Archangelic Guardians the adept speaks the following words:

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et liquidi simul ignīs qui me custōdiant, fōvēant, protegant et
defendant in hoc circulo.

The visualized archangels are addressed as follows:

Oriens

Salvē Raphaēl, cuius spiritus est aura ē montibus orta et vestis
aurata sicut sōlis lūmina.

Occidens

Salvē Gabriēl, cuius nominē tremunt nymphae subter undas
ludentēs

Australis

Salvē Michaēl, quanto splendidior quam ignēs sempiterni est tua
majestas.

Borealis

Salvē Uriēl, nam tellus et omnia viva regno tuo pergaudent.

The adept now proceeds to visualize a lambent six-pointed star above his head, its interlaced triangles anticipating the fusion of his temporal self with the forces he aspires to evoke.⁸

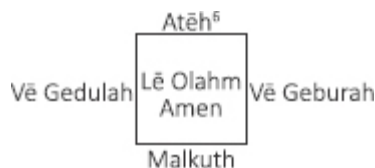
This part of the ritual—known as the ‘Banishing Ritual of the Lesser Pentagram’—is concluded by a second formulation of the Kabbalistic Cross during which the adept faces west, his back to the altar.

Turning to the east again he focuses his attention on the Tree of Life, for he is ready to move from Malkuth, the sphere of Earth, to Yesod, which is the silver gateway to the astral world. Yesod is the sphere of the Moon, and the name of Gabriel will be the one he gives on approaching the Ishim stationed at the gate, among them one or more of the Guardian Angels assigned to us at birth. This password will be enough, and having uttered it he imagines a blue-and-silver curtain parting to allow him access to the wonderland beyond.

Non accēdet ad mē malum cuiusquemōdi quōniam angeli sancti
custōdiunt mē ubicumquē sum.

With these words the adept proclaims his confidence in the angelic protection he has invoked.

Occidens



The following words serve as the adept's laissez-passer to the astral world:

Excubitorēs, in nōminē Gabrieli, fas mihi tangere limina illa

The following confession is recited three times

Nescio quis sim

Nescio unde vēniam

Nescio quo ēam

Quaero

Sed quid nescio



While still on the threshold of the astral kingdom the adept humbly acknowledges his ignorance of the sublime mysteries about to envelop him. He recites his confession three times and follows this with three series of seven knocks with the gavel.^{[9](#)}

Before going further he must attend to the incense on his altar and anoint himself ready for the journey he is about to undertake. The magical oil is rubbed on the forehead, the inside of each wrist and under the chin. Oil should be applied also to the base of the spine if the adept plans a sexual climax to his rite.^{[10](#)}

Now that he is fully prepared he may step out onto the sphere of Yesod where he visualizes the Yesodic correspondences in his crystal or beyond the edge of the circle.

Silently he informs the elemental intelligences which sefira he intends to work with. This will, of course, be the one shown alongside the ritual planet in the second Table of Correspondences.

Mentally he now proceeds towards his destination along the sefirothic paths of the Tree. As he goes he visualizes all the forms, colours, etc., he would expect to encounter en route. He will be helped in this by the information extracted from the Tables of Correspondences and recorded on

his ritual card. As he approaches each sefira he constrains its angelic guardians to admit him in the name of the appropriate sefirothic angel.

These words accompany each anointing:

Odōrā;tis unguentibus mē unguo. Exsultat cor, fervent sensus.
Membrīs vēnit vigor habilis, Et purificā;tus sum.

On leaving Yesod the adept marvels at the wonders confronting him:

Hanc regiōnem fēlix aggrēdior, Sub pedibūsque mīrā;cula miror.
Fervet mens, exsultat cor Et inter stellas progrēdior.

Dis immortā;libus volentibus, qui inter ignēs sempiternos habitant,
precor ā; spiritibus sanctis ut progrēdiam ad [name of the relevant sefira]. Ducīte mē, O spiritūs, per locos tenebrōsos, ad sedēs vestras.

Divum praecepta secutus stō

Antē alta ostia

Tremens ibi vidēo

Divum simulā;cra,

Sed nomen N. loquor

Et confidenter ingrēdior

When at last he reaches his destination and satisfies the guardians at its door, he strikes the gong or gavel ten times. As he does, he visualizes the sefirothic form materializing in the Triangle of Art. This form may be allowed to assume whatever other shapes it chooses, although the adept makes sure that every two minutes or so he bids it resume the shape originally visualized. The gong is struck the same number of times as that attributed to the particular sefira on the Tree of Life. If the form refuses to obey, it must be commanded to do so in the name of the seven archangels or if necessary, in the name of God Himself. However, if all else fails the pentacle may be unveiled and used to force the unruly form into submission.

Although the form is obliged to remain outside the circle, the force it represents may flow into it. There it masses itself near the cardinal point most sympathetic to it, where it is psychically visible as a swirling cloud of

vapour. The theory is that communication with the entity outside the circle, once established, enables it to surrender its power to one of the elemental archangels who will then permit it to flow into the circle through the pentagrammatic gate constructed earlier.



To bid the form return to its original shape the adept should point his sword at it and speak thus:

Tē nunc transforma in formam

vēram

Quod eludet speciēs mentem

mēam

A rebellious entity may be constrained by the following words:

Mihi tē est aequum parēre In angelorum septem nominē Michaēl,
Gabriēl, Raphaēl, Uriēl, Chamaēl, Haniēl atque Zadkiē¹¹

Pointing his sword at the manifested form the adept commands it to depart:

Monstrum ē locis emissum

summis

Abi nunc ex oculis mēis.



When he is ready, the adept can dismiss the sefirothic form, after which he give three sets of knocks.^{[11](#)}

The next occupant of the triangle will be one of the planetary forms which may be visualized in the ordinary way. Once the form has been built up, it will assume an individuality of its own and there is no reason why

the adept should not converse with it, if so disposed. But on no account is he to be inveigled into leaving the circle or admitting the form into it. The temptation to do one or other will be very great since a favourite trick of such forms is to appeal to the magician's good nature. They can be exceedingly persuasive. Equally dangerous is their ability to assume an appearance uncannily close to the adept's erotic ideal. If this happens, like St Anthony in the desert, he must resist all blandishments and enjoin the form to resume its original shape.

During his ritual the adept may find that the walls of the room in which he is working appear to dissolve into the most pleasing landscapes. He may even find that as he strolls along the sefirothic paths the landscape about him changes without his willing it, while the sefirothic correspondences present themselves of their own compliant accord. This is a fascinating experience and one you may be lucky enough to enjoy quite early in your career. On the other hand, some magicians have to wait years before their inner eye perceives spontaneously the splendours of the astral world.



Planetary forms are controlled by the judicious use of divine names, and the following words are usually effective:

Mēae artis non immēmōr

Et nomen Dēi lentē loquor-

Yod-Hē-Vau-Hē Tzabaōth^{[12](#)}

Transfōrmā;tē in formam vērām

By now the adept has visualized the required forms and, it is hoped, contacted their astral equivalents. In addition, the force behind these forms will have been admitted into the circle. At this point we come to the most important part of the ritual. Everything that has gone before was merely a preparation for the impending moment when, to revive our earlier comparison with electricity, we shall flick the switch that lets in the cosmic power.

Fresh incense should be burned as the climax to the rite approaches. These words are spoken:

In ignem iacto unguenta pretiōsa et mīra somnio. Nam fūmos
somniferos exhā;lat ignīs et quae erant somnia vēra facta sunt.

This is something no book can teach. The assembled correspondences, the visualization and other ritual details do no more than help the adept find the switch. And as that switch lies deep within himself, he alone can turn it on. To do so he must temporarily lose his reason, for it is reason that bars the doors of consciousness to where the astral world lies waiting. He must, in short, surrender to a state of unreason comparable to the divine frenzy of the Bacchantes. Only then will he and the ineffable be one. The Bacchantes, you may recall, got drunk and then beat one another with vine fronds, but this will certainly not be to everyone's taste. There is no doubt that alcohol—and drugs too for that matter—are the surest means of breaking down mental barriers, but as we have said they do tend to weaken the will while going about it. This is why drugs, notably entheogens,¹³ though frequently used in group ritual, are not recommended in magical work conducted on one's own.

Some magicians cultivate the sweet madness by reciting one word over and over again. The adept begins by heaping incense on the charcoal and then, kneeling before the altar, he starts his verbal repetition or mantra. Any word will do for his purpose. It may be one of the words of power, an euphonious word of the adept's own invention or even a keyword associated with his ritual motive. (A crude example—with echoes of Liza Minnelli and Joel Grey—might be the word ‘money’ in a ritual designed to procure wealth.)

While repeating the mantra, the adept imagines the god-form or the most congenial of the planetary/sefirothic forms materializing behind his back, visualizing this in as much detail as possible. Slowly, as the altar candles flicker, he will sense with a sureness which precludes all doubt that the visualized form is towering inside the circle behind him. On no account must he turn his head to look at whatever is there and the temptation to do so must be sternly resisted: the form may be unbearably hideous or else possess a beauty that may literally be fatal. In the meantime the adept should endeavor to continue his mantra, although by now his heart will no doubt be beating furiously. Whatever else happens he

must not move, even when he senses the form so close he can all but feel its breath upon his neck. Above all he must not panic, but should comfort himself with the thought that he is safe enough provided he remains where he is. At last—and he will certainly know when—the god-form will take control of him.

As the god-form takes control the magician will feel an exquisite giddiness somewhere at the base of his skull, one that convulses the whole of his body. As this happens, and while the power surges into him, he compels himself to visualize whatever he is aiming to accomplish, strenuously willing its success. He must put every ounce of effort into this, and like our friends the Bacchantes whip himself into a veritable frenzy, confident that his will, supernaturally enhanced, must *necessarily* produce the result he is eager to achieve.

The discharge of the force evoked may be accompanied by the following words:

Effusus labor. Defuncta vīta.

Fiat nunc voluntas mēa.

From now on no further incense should be added to the burner.

Instead, with ‘peace of mind, all passion spent,’¹⁴ the adept should turn now to the west, kneel and whisper:

Refectus particeps rītus sacri, scio dēsidērium animae ac voluntā;tem labōrum mēōrum perfecta esse.

Once the force has been successfully dispatched, he may well yield to a delicious feeling of exhaustion. The mystical union, briefly savoured, is now over. He is himself again, “calm of mind, all passion spent”.^{[14](#)}

For some magicians the dislocation of reason coincides with the moment of sacrifice. Others perform the sacrifice before proceeding to the climax of the rite, arguing that vital energy discharged by the victim's blood assists the possessing entity to appear in the circle. Traditionally the victim's throat is cut and the warm blood allowed to gush into a chalice, possibly of the appropriate planetary metal. Those for whom the oblation coincides with the climax of the rite generally visualize the god-form behind them in the usual way, but possession then occurs as the magician drinks from the chalice, or if squeamish, plunges his hands into the blood it

contains. At the same time the intention is visualized and willed in the normal manner.¹⁵

These words should coincide with the actual moment of the immolation:

Rubrum ā; iugulo dēmitto cruōrem

Ut tibi supplex donem honōrem

None of the above, let it be said, is endorsed by the author. Sacrificial acts are cruel, messy and above all, unnecessary. Fortunately, no less effective, is the use of sex to attain the desired climax, though that, too, is by no means necessary or in some cases even appropriate. Your magical efforts will be no less effective if you do without both. For the record, however, if a sexual element is involved, the outburst of power is effected at the moment of orgasm, with possession occurring seconds before. It should be stressed that the sexual act, however enjoyable, must at all times remain subordinate to its magical purpose. It is closer to a *hieros gamos* than licentiousness.

These are the words of thanks:

Sumpto caelestē auxilio vōbis

N. et Nn. gratias humiliter ago

To dismiss the assembled forces the adept walks around the circle holding the veiled pentacle and uttering the following words:

In Dēi sanctō nominē

Gratias ago sine fraudō

Umbris omnibus tenuibus

Et lucem claram ferentibus.

Hōc templō vōs dimittō,

Abīte nunc, opērē facto

Although the ritual climax has come and gone there are still some things to be done before the job is finished. For a start the celebrant must return to the sphere of Malkuth, retracing his earlier steps, and at each sefira he

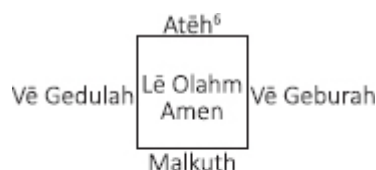
passes, thanking the appropriate archangel and servitors for their hospitality. Thanks are due also to the elemental forces which have been evoked in the course of the rite. These must then be thanked and dismissed, as must all the other forces which gather uninvited whenever magic is performed. Such forces are attracted to the circle like moths to a candle, and although generally harmless must nevertheless be ordered back to whence they came. Failure to do this can sometimes have unwelcome consequences since these forces may linger on causing all kinds of mischief, from playing at being poltergeists to violent psychic assault.¹⁶ Lest this sound fatuous, it must again be stressed that the personification of these forces is no more than a convention to render them intelligible. Although they may appear to us in traditional forms, they remain natural, or if you like, supernatural forces working behind and through the common-place world of form.

Next the adept graciously thanks the four archangels whose respective 'rays' were contacted earlier when he visualized their anthropomorphic forms. He turns to each compass point to address them individually in turn.

Finally the ceremony is concluded with the formulation of the Kabbalistic Cross when the adept faces west.

The adept faces each of the cardinal points in turn (east, north, south, west). With hands folded and head bowed he speaks the following words:

Ab incurso malevolōrum me protexisti et munera ferentēs venisti.
Praesta, quaero, rex (orientis/borēalis/australis/occidentis) ut
custōdiae munerumque causa gratias tibi agens, beneficia etiam
majora sumam.



Seven or ten strokes of the gong or gavel mark the closing of the operation, with an extra four knocks if a little extra 'luck' is needed, four being the number of Jupiter. Since it is the exoteric aspect of a mystery, no printed ritual can reveal the true beauty and meaning it conceals. Essentially it is a dramatic confrontation between the participant and the cosmos, and as such demands to be enacted, just as the plays of Shakespeare, though they make fine reading, are meant to be performed. You must 'live' the ritual in order fully to understand it. You must make it a part of yourself. To this end there is nothing to prevent you introducing into it any other details which appeal to you. Some of these you can obtain from books of magic, others from your own imagination. Provided the basic structure remains the same the rite can only be enriched by these additions.

THE EGYPTIAN MASTER RITUAL

The inclusion of this Egyptian ritual must not be taken to mean that the writer is one of those who regard Egypt as the seat of all wonder and magic. That religious mystery was part of everyday life in ancient Egypt and that like all such mysteries it enshrined profound spiritual truths, is beyond dispute. Herodotus, in his 'Account of Egypt' (*Histories*, Book 2), was probably correct when he said that the Egyptians of his time were the most religious people in the world. But the fact remains that much of their religion was as primitive and superstitious as that found anywhere else and only by the eighteenth dynasty do we encounter religious writings of appreciable merit. This, and the groundless enthusiasm of some Egyptophiles, have led a few scholars to deny there were any 'mysteries' worth mentioning in the valley of the Nile. However, such a view is as extreme and untenable as its opposite which discerns occult significance in every brick making up the Great Pyramid.

The prevalence of magic, certainly by the first millennium B.C., is acknowledged by scholars, its practice by then no longer confined to the priesthood but prevalent among the lay population as well. This suggests that whereas sacerdotalism—the belief that only a special group of people might perform religious ceremonies—remained intact, the practice of magic became available to all, enabling some at least to assume in life, as they would in death, the divinity of Osiris.

The origin of the Egyptian ritual given below is unknown. Certain lines in it are reminiscent of the *Book of the Dead*, but an examination of the Papyrus of Ani shows that none has actually been lifted from that text, even though many expressions are similar. One claim, owing more perhaps to imagination than scholarship, is that it originated in Alexandria, later falling into the hands of one of the local Gnostic sects, while managing nevertheless to avoid Jewish or Christian accretions. Reportedly brought to Europe in the late Middle Ages, perhaps with the Crusades, it seems to have disappeared until the middle of the 18th Century when it reportedly turned up among papers held by one of the early Masonic lodges in Lyons, possibly La Parfaite Amitié (1753). It is here that Cagliostro (and, before him, Casanova, following his own initiation) may have come across it. Certainly by the beginning of the seventeen-eighties, Cagliostro made several references to 'Egyptian' Freemasonry, even proceeding in 1784 to found his own 'Egyptian Lodge', again in Lyons.

Over time the rite or variants of it were circulating among various occult and neo-Rosicrucian groups, gaining the attention of Kevin MacKenzie, editor of the *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia* (1870) and an acquaintance of both Eliphas Lévi and the Rev. A. F. A. Woodford, one of the founders of the Hermetic Order of the

Golden Dawn. The version presented here may be composed of ritual elements from more than one source but all seem authentic and no less efficacious for being arranged in their present form. The fact remains of course that apart from certain funeral observances, our knowledge of rituals used by the ancient Egyptians is pretty fragmentary, though from time to time attempts have been made to reconstruct them.¹⁷

The details given below are thought to date from the illustrious eighteenth dynasty (1543–1292 BC), but there is good reason to suppose they may go back as far as the fifth and sixth dynasties, to a period some two and a half thousand years before the start of our era. The text accompanying the hieroglyphics¹⁸ is intended to provide some idea of their linguistic equivalent, but the correct pronunciation is largely a matter for conjecture. Even so, the Egyptian—and not the English translation—should be spoken by the adept. For this reason a short pronunciation guide is tentatively offered below, based on both magical tradition and the views of Egyptologists. There is certainly no guarantee that what you find there is representative of what was spoken at the Court of Unas, Neferkare Pepi or the kindly (again according to Herodotus) Menkaure, his pyramid the smallest of the three found at Giza.

Vowels: These are sounded long or short as italicised in the English examples, below. Long vowels are generally surmounted by a dot (the letter ‘i’ excepted), or less commonly, a dash.

a	pat
ā or ā;	palm
e	get
i	fit
ī	feet
o	not
ō or ō	note
u	put
ū or ū	hoof

Consonants: Only those that differ from English are noted.

x	equivalent of Greek χ (<i>chai</i>) and sounded like chin Scottish word, loch
d	as in English ‘this’
g	always hard, as in English ‘go’

h	aspirated, but tending to resemble χ , though not as strong. F like High German 'ch'
kh	a difficult staccato sound mid-way between χ and h
t	as in English 'thin'

The symbol' after certain letters indicates a break which occurs mainly in words where the same letter is repeated, e.g. t'ta'at (the divine chiefs).

Stress: As a general rule all syllables are stressed equally. An exception will arise, however, if a long vowel (· or -) in a word otherwise composed of short vowels imposes its own stress on a syllable, e.g. mā;tennu (roads).

The Timing of the Egyptian Ritual

The time of performance may be astrologically determined in exactly the same way as for Kabbalistic rituals. The planetary, but not the sefirotic, correspondences may then be introduced in the usual way. However, as the Egyptian master ritual is primarily a solar rite, it is far less dependent on the astrological time-table. One of its great beauties is that it may be performed on any day and in any season provided it is not within twenty-four hours before or after a full solar eclipse.

Two other considerations should be borne in mind. First, the ritual must be performed at dawn, midday or sunset *and at no other time*; second, works of discord, destruction or death must *never* be undertaken at dawn or midday. Such negative operations should be confined to sunset, just as Kabbalistic rites of a similar nature are usually conducted when the Moon is waning. Of course, this does not mean that constructive ritual work cannot likewise be performed at sunset if that hour happens to be the most convenient.

The Place

Since it is an all-purpose solar ritual, the colours associated with it are white and gold, and the adept should strive to ensure that these are conspicuously represented. The altar will face east if the ritual takes place at dawn, south if at midday and west if at sunset. Although no physical circle is required, the four elemental points, though important only in late Egyptian magic, may be marked out as in the previous ritual. The archangelic beings will not, however, be invoked in this instance. More appropriate, perhaps is the tradition of placing a flower at each cardinal point while beseeching the favour of the elemental guardian under its Egyptian aspect. (Details are given in the commentary which again accompanies the ritual text.)

As for ritual instruments upon the altar, there will be no need for the pentacle, Tree of Life, and sword, though in the past, when sadly there was less concern about elephants, an ivory wand was often recommended. (A wand carved from pear wood, often used to make woodwind instruments, is a perfectly good substitute.) Some occultists also place on the altar an object that will serve to link the celebrant's mind with ancient Egypt. This can be anything from a genuine relic to, say, a photograph of the temples at Abu Simbel. In addition the adept should have in front of him a small bowl of milk to which has been added a teaspoonful of honey, a bowl of water,¹⁹ and a posy of aromatic herbs such as mint, marjoram or rosemary.

The pre-ritual observances are similar to those already given for the Grade 1 and Grade 2 operations. It is particularly important that the adept complete the preliminary work before the actual moment of dawn, midday or sunset. This requires good timing.

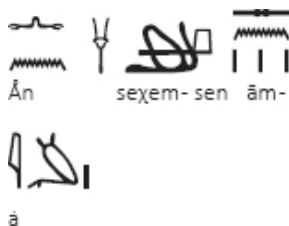
Again, the success of the ritual depends ultimately on the adept's ability to realize its full magical potential. Read objectively, the Egyptian ritual, like any other, appears to consist of pretty formulations. But it was never meant to be read objectively. It is up to you to discover through personal experience its latent esoteric value. You may be sure that once your heart and mind become linked through it with the Akashic memory of Egyptian civilization, you will find here a richness and power far beyond your wildest expectations.

Egyptian Rite

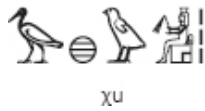
Consecration of the Circle

The adept (*Reh-Het*) picks up the wand, and holding it thumb uppermost to show his mastery over nature, draws a circle around his working area. At the same time he visualizes the protective barrier thus created.

As was pointed out earlier, the Graeco-Egyptian papyri make no mention of the magic circle and the adept may do without one if he wishes. In that case he should wear an Egyptian amulet (see [Chapter 9](#)). Regardless of whether or not a circle is drawn, the appropriate words must be spoken in order to secure protection.



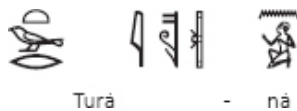
Let the Shining One not have



power over me

The Purification

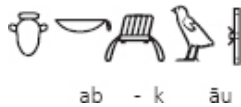
The adept dips his finger in the water and touching his forehead declares himself ritually purified.



I have purified myself and

The Anointing

The adept anoints his forehead and wrists with oleum magicale no. 3, thereby making himself worthy to receive the great Sun god. The base of the spine should also be anointed if the serpent power (Kundalini) needs to be aroused for a sexual climax to the rite (see Footnote 10).



my heart is filled with joy



Having anointed myself with unguents

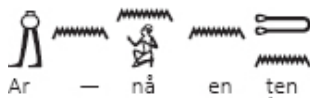


I have made myself strong

The Incensing

Incense was valued by the ancient Egyptians since it was regarded as the ideal offering to the pantheon on high. The word itself, *snutri*, means literally ‘that which makes divine’. Any incense will do for this purpose, but you may care to know that an Egyptian recipe specifies the following ingredients: salt, camphor, galangal/ginger root, myrrh, opopanax and bay laurel. Appropriate at sunset, according to the Greek historian, Plutarch, is Kyphi, an incense compounded from, inter alia, cinnamon, cassia, cedar, juniper berries, mastic, myrrh, galangal/ginger root and honey.

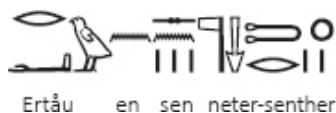
Whenever the adept places more incense on the burner in the course of the ritual, he solemnly informs the god of his pious intention.



I bring you



perfume and incense, O Glorious One.

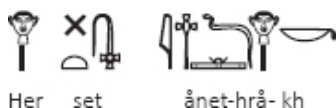


Let me place incense

The Four Points

The adept picks four flowers and proceeds to the eastern point, where he places one of the blooms before going on to do the same at each of the other points. As he does so he respectfully dedicates his offering to the elemental gods.

If the ritual intention is malevolent, the adept must begin with the north as he might in the Kabbalistic rite.



on this fire as homage to Thee



East: Anet-hrā-kh Tefnet

All homage to Tefnut (Water)

North: Anet-hrā-kh Geb

All Homage to Geb (Earth)

South: Anet-hrā-kh Atum

All homage to Atum (Fire)

West: Anet-hrā-kh Shû

All homage to Shu (Air)

The Dedication

The adept returns to the altar where he requests the blessing of Khentamentiu. (The name means Leader of all Westerners.) Originally a local deity, he became associated with Osiris. Indeed, the god of the dead is sometimes referred to as Osiris-Khentamentiu. Because the magician regards himself as Osiris for ritual purposes, the co-operation of Khentamentiu is particularly apt.



Tebhu — â neter Khentamentiu

I supplicate thee Khentamentiu (this is recited twelve times)

For malevolent intentions the name of Seth (Set) is generally substituted for that of Khentamentiu. Seth, the slayer of Horus, has rightly or wrongly become the patron of ‘black’ rituals based on the Egyptian tradition.

The Attendance

The adept now waits for the sun to rise, reach its zenith or set, depending on the time of his ritual.²⁰ As he waits he recites a litany which will attune his mind to the Egyptian forms of the cosmic force he hopes to utilize. Any of the major deities may be selected for this purpose and their names can be preceded by a suitable expression, such as ‘Hail N.’, ‘All homage to N.’ or ‘I adore N.’ The examples given opposite will serve as a basis on which to build.



Tua Rā

Ra, I adore thee



Ā



Anset

Hail Isis



Anet-hrā-kh



Tehûti

All homage to Thoth

Alternatively the adept may incant the following, which is an Egyptian formula containing the magically transformed names of the gods Osiris and Seth:

O Mamûram-Kahā;b

O Oualbpā;gā;

O Kammā;rā;

O Kamalô

O Karhenmon

O Amagā;ā;ā;

For those who prefer something less polytheistic there is a devotional litany (opposite) which is equally appropriate.

It would be reassuring to think the Egyptians recognized only one Supreme Being, worshipped under different aspects and each represented by a different god or goddess. However, there is no evidence of this. The only sign of monotheism was the worship of Aton, the sun's disc,^{[21](#)} which flourished under the aegis of Akhenaten, known until the fifth year of his reign as Amenhotep IV. After his death the country reverted to polytheism, a trend initiated by his son, Tutankhamun.



Tua neter
I adore God



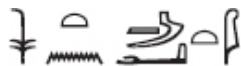
Neb pet

Lord of Heaven



Neb ta

Lord of Earth



Suten mâ-ât

King of Righteousness



Neb h eh

Lord of Eternity

The Arrival of the God

The following ritual proclamations differ according to whether the rite is performed at dawn, midday or sunset. The following symbols will therefore be used to show which is appropriate for each:



dawn



midday



sunset

 As the sun appears above the horizon the adept visualizes the god-form Khepri (Khepera), depicted as a man with the head of a beetle.^{[22](#)} This insect is a suitable emblem because in ancient times it was believed to be self-begotten and so became a symbol of life emerging from inertness.^{[23](#)} To this belief we owe the many scarabs that turn up in Egyptian tombs.



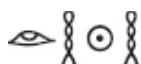
Heg t'etta

Prince of Everlasting Life



Neter anj

God of Life



Ān he

Builder of Eternity



Ā

Kheperā

Hail Khopri

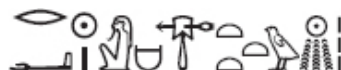


Ut'a hen neter pen seps

who now approaches in divine splendor



The midday belongs to Ra, undisputable ruler of the Hathoric²⁴ sky, whom the adept addresses as the Lord of Rays. He is the visible emblem of God and his appearance marked the beginning of time. In the pyramid texts the soul is said to make its way after death to Ra's abode in heaven where it is assured of eternal bliss.



Ā

Rā

neb

satetu

Hail Ra Lord of Rays



Neter

anḫ

neb mert

Thou art the God of Life, Lord of Love



In his setting Ra is adored under the aspect of Tem or Tmu, a variant of Atum and possibly related to the verb 'to end' (*tem*). The evening Sun is often depicted in the form of a king who is has a crown  on his head and bears in his hands the royal scepter  and the sacred anch or emblem of life . As such he has always represent the death of Osiris and his subsequent departure to the next world.²⁵ But this departure is a triumphal one, a 'Coming forth by day', for Osiris, 'Lord of Eternity', is the conqueror of death, and has become the symbol of our own immortality. After his invocation the adept praises the setting Sun whose glory is emblazoned across the darkening sky.



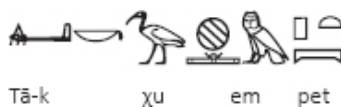
All people live



[when] thou shinest.



Hail Te



Thou givest splendour in heaven,



as a phoenix going in and coming forth

The Lustration

Having made sure there is ample incense burning, the adept prepares to contact the Shining Ones of Egyptian tradition. These are similar to the elemental rulers who figure in Western magical lore, and will serve the magician in the same way. To begin with, the magician makes a lustration at each of the cardinal points, beginning with the east. This involves dipping the herbal posy into the bowl of water and asperging each point in turn. As he does so he visualizes the Shining Ones manifesting as shafts of light or as minor god-forms (*axemiu*). Returning to the altar he now dips the posy into the bowl of milk and again asperges the cardinal points. Back at the altar he sprinkles a final libation to the right, to the left and lastly in front of the altar, reciting the appropriate words as he does so.

The Sacrifice

If a blood sacrifice is to be performed, this is the time to do it. But first the adept must hold aloft the ritual dagger and proclaim himself king of creation. The

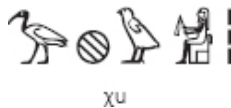
victim's blood, though preferably a drop (but no more!) of his own, is then mixed with the milk and honey before he proceeds to make a further libation repeating the words already spoken (*Au âri-nâ* etc).



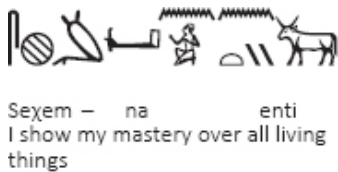
I have made offerings



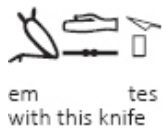
To the gods and sacrifices to



the Shining ones



Sexem — na enti
I show my mastery over all living things



em tes
with this knife



Nuk neb sesep

I become one with the Lord of Light



Mâât Heru tâ — na

O Eye of Horus, grant unto me

The adept has now to take upon himself the identity of the Sun god who, as the master of all life, has lordship over the Shining Ones and their divine guardians. The adept may symbolically assume his new role by placing a gold ring upon his finger and tracing the astrological symbol of the Sun above his heart.

The climax of the ritual is now at hand and the advice already given in the description of the Kabbalistic ritual should be followed here. The mantra provided opposite may be recited while the adept works himself up to the required state of frenzy. A different mantra is necessary if the ritual is to have a sexual climax.²⁶

The ritual climax demands the merging of the self with the Sun. This means that the adept will become filled with solar energy which he then projects towards his ritual intention. As he feels himself possessed by the forces he should *silently* recite the words of consecration. On no account must these be spoken aloud. They have not been translated into English.



The secret longings of my heart



Swifter than light



O Shining Ones, return now.



to the heights of Heaven



Postcommunion

The adept's first task when has recovered is to dismiss the Shining Ones as he would their Kabbalistic equivalents.

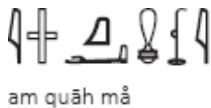
The adept now strikes his gong or gavel ten times (eleven if the rite was dedicated to Seth) and reviews his ritual experience before returning to the everyday world.

His immediate task on conclusion of the rite will be to enter a careful record of his experience in the magical diary. The flowers he has used to mark the four elemental points should then be burned.

Although the text may take some time to read at first, the Egyptian ritual takes only a short time to perform. This makes it eminently suitable for those of us who have busy lives to lead. Another virtue is that once you are thoroughly familiar with it you can perform it entirely in your imagination, visualizing the ceremonial as you go along. Only the words of consecration, spoken in a 'just voice' (*ma-khuru*), need be uttered aloud.



I have walked beside the Great Ones



Just as they pass close to



God who, mighty and resplendent,



is the sum total of all things.

You may find it difficult at first to cultivate the complete involvement needed but with practice it will happen. Your will-power is almost certain to become sufficiently—magically—enhanced to help realise your intention . Be assured that you will have drawn close not only to those who once spoke those selfsame words. but to the Shining Ones to whom they were addressed.

¹ This is a reference to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (see footnote 2) and [Appendix 3](#); Mathers.

² We have hitherto used the term adept to signify magician and shall continue to do so, even though the word implies a high level of proficiency and for that reason should perhaps not be used indiscriminately. However, repeated use of the word magician can get tedious, while alternatives like thaumaturge or sorcerer are either precious or inappropriate. From 1892 onwards, members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (see [Appendix 3](#); Mathers) confined the term ‘adept’ to those accepted into what became an élite (or Inner) group, the Rosae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis (Order of the Ruby Rose and Gold Cross). Only then did members, hitherto probationers, proceed through the ‘Portal’ and, having demonstrated their magical aptitude, qualify for the title ‘Adeptus’. During their apprenticeship within the Outer Order they were required to study, *inter alia*, astrology, the kabbalah and how to collaborate with the four elements. Worth noting is that Aleister Crowley failed to demonstrate that his magical skills were enough to justify advancement to the Inner Order. That decision was overruled by S. L. MacGregor Mathers (see [Appendix 3](#)), an action that eventually led to a schism within the organisation.

³ Newcomers to occultism often expect they will have to dress up for magic, usually in something halfway between a toga and a jazzed-up version of a monk's habit. Many readers will be pleased to know therefore that dress is optional. In private, ritual vestments are often more of an embarrassment than a blessing, unless you happen to be someone who enjoys dressing up. Most occultists defend the use of special robes on the grounds that our everyday clothing soaks up all sorts of mundane influences which, they argue, can have a deleterious effect on magical work. There is no doubt that astral hygiene is important, but this need not turn one into a faddist. I would suggest therefore that you need not worry unduly if you lack special clothing to wear for the occasion. It would, after all, be a poor type of ritual that depended on sartorial formality for its success. After all, many contemporary witches opt to wear no clothes at all.

Where vestments are helpful is in group work. Not only do they add to the sense of occasion but their symbolic colouring increases the psychological impact which the ritual has on subconscious levels of the mind. Again, the decision as to what is worn can be left to the group or its leader, and provided the robes accord with the correspondences, they can be as simple or elaborate as imagination or dress sense allows. A word of warning, however: some occultists insist that ritual vestments should have no buckles, buttons or hooks on them. This may spring from the old Roman law which forbade a priest of Jupiter (*Flamen Dialis*) from wearing knots or rings about his clothing. Personally I see nothing wrong with them.

⁴ Ritual details are given on the right of the page and described in a column alongside. You will see that the words spoken by the magician are in Latin and you may wonder why. Let it be said therefore that English or any other language is a perfectly good alternative. This particular ritual contains so much Latin because its formulations were consolidated during the Renaissance, when Latin was still a common language among scholars throughout Europe. Some may feel it unnecessary nowadays to perpetuate the habit but there are persuasive grounds for doing so. One is that Latin lends a dignity to the proceedings which might be compromised were it abandoned. Another is that while Latin is now an international language only among a diminishing number of clerics and scholars, it does give the rite an appearance of universality. Of course, it would be foolish for any magician to stand inside a circle muttering words whose meaning escapes him. Therefore the accompanying commentary explains what precisely is being said and done.

Those unsure of their Latin pronunciation may care to note the consonants c and g are always hard as in cat or goat. As for vowel sounds, they are usually the same as those underlined in the words in brackets: a (bat), e (get), i (bin), o (got), u (twin). Vowels topped by- should be lengthened and stressed, eg. ā; (tārt) and ō (note),

though ē corresponds to the French é (café). Do remember that no letter is silent. Above all don't worry overmuch about getting it right.

[5](#) In rites which have a malevolent intention, and so involve the klippothic aspect of the force evoked, the adept should turn to face north (see Chapter 6, footnote 15). Throughout the rest of the ritual north changes places with east and any formulations are adapted accordingly. In addition, he must strike his gong or gavel eleven times whenever seven or ten strokes are recommended in the text. Such rites are often dedicated to a demonic entity named Peolphán, said by Reginald Scot in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) to be Regent of the North. Bear in mind that such entities, whether 'good; or 'bad;, are artificial constructs invented to make them conceivable and, in certain circumstances, perceptible.

[6](#) As the reader will have gathered, the words spoken by the adept are those which are *not* italicized.

[7](#) These images, together with their complementary colours, are most important. The adept must reflect on them constantly during his magical training so as to be able to bring them effortlessly to mind. As previously remarked (footnote 2), this was one of the main requirements for apprentice magicians within the Outer Order of the Golden Dawn.

[8](#) The six-pointed star or hexagram is generally taken to symbolize the aspiration of the lower self (upward pointing triangle) towards the higher (downward pointing triangle) or alternatively, spirit reflected in matter. The pentagram, too, has a symbolic connection with humanity, representative of man endowed with reason and thereby raised above the beasts. Readers will have seen Leonardo da Vinci's famous drawing where the figure of a man is superimposed on a pentagram enclosed within a circle.

[9](#) Each stroke is represented by a square.

[10](#) At the base of the spine, according to yogic and tantric tradition, is *Muladhara*, one of seven primary chakras and home to Kundalini, the Serpent Fire. When stimulated or, if you like, ignited, a 'flame' is said to ascend along a central column (*sushumna*), passing through each chakra in turn until finally reaches the topmost one, the thousand-petalled *Sahasrara*, often linked to the pineal gland. Its arrival there is purported to bring spiritual enlightenment and some claim a recollection of past lives. Because of Kundalini's affinity with sexual energy its arousal is said also to enhance sensual experience. Observed clairvoyantly the Serpent Fire, when activated, appears as a jet of blue fire, emitting red flames from one side and yellow from the other. In men the red flames are on the left (*ida*), the yellow on the right (*pingala*), but in women it is the other way around, while among gay men and women the pattern is variable.

[11](#) The *Book of Enoch* names the seven as Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Raguel, Remiel and Saraquel. On the other hand the pseudo-Dionysius (5th Century) lists them as Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Chamuel, Jophiel and Zadkiel, this version being the one generally preferred by occultists, though here Jophiel has been replaced by Haniel, a name found in the *Sigillum Dei Aemath*, a magical diagram favoured by the Elizabethan magus, Dr. John Dee. They may well be one and the same.

[12](#) Each sefira is associated with a particular divine appellation which may be substituted here. Thus if the adept were working with Tifareth, the name Tetragrammaton—Aloah-Va-Daath would be appropriate. Other names, with their related sefirot in brackets are: Eheiē (*Kether*), Yod-He-Vau-Hē (*Hokmah*), Yod-Hē-Vau-Hē Elohīm (*Binah*), El (*Hesed*), Elohīm Gibor (*Geburah*), Yod-Hē-Vau-Hē Tzabaoth (*Netsah*), Elohīm Tzabaoth (*Hod*), Shaddai El Chai (*Yesod*), Adonai Malekh Ha-aretz (*Malkuth*).

[13](#) These are substances that promote an altered state of consciousness, particularly with the aim of inducing religious or mystical enlightenment. The natural sort include mead (fermented honey and water, often mixed with herbs), *salvia divinorum* (a variety of sage), fly agaric (a type of mushroom) and cannabis, though the last tends to act more as a relaxant than a psychedelic stimulant. Synthetic versions include mescaline and LSD.

[14](#) John Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, final line.

[15](#) The sacrificial creature is not, you will be relieved to learn, one of those listed in the Table of Correspondences. In the past doves, pigeons and poultry (especially white or black cockerels) were reportedly favoured. In the nineteen-twenties Aleister Crowley, by then installed in what was meant to become (but didn't) his Abbey of Thelema in Sicily, made a botched attempt to sacrifice a cat, Mischette. The unfortunate animal, its throat inexpertly cut, ran around the room, splattering blood on the participants, before being caught and finally dispatched.

[16](#) The symptoms of psychic assault range from a vague malaise to hallucinations. A competent magician can drive out the obsessing entity, although a long stint of psychoanalysis may teach the mind to acknowledge its presence and so perform its own exorcism. Some occultists believe a substantial number of patients in mental hospitals are victims of such an obsession. In 1930 Dion Fortune (see [Appendix 3](#)) discussed this topic in her book *Psychic Self-Defence*. The theory is that a patient has little or no control over his subconscious, which as a result opens its gates to the astral flotsam and jetsam waiting to get inside. There may be a few cases where this is the cause of dementia, but it would be wrong to revert to so mediaeval a view to explain madness in general.

[17](#) See, for example J. Vandier *La Religion égyptienne* (Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1949).

[18](#) These would have been arranged in perpendicular rows, but have been set out horizontally for our present purpose.

[19](#) Purists recommend lotus petals (🪷) floating on the water, but this is a luxury few occidental magicians can afford.

[20](#) If unable to observe the sun's progress, the adept should have a watch on his altar which will tell him when the precise time has arrived. This he can discover from any newspaper, and if necessary, adapt to his location. The solar positions are sometimes given in GMT, so again an adjustment may be needed to determine the local equivalent.)

[21](#) Aton is depicted as the Sun holding the symbol of life (☀️). The famous Aton hymn was composed by Akhenaten (King Amenhotep IV) of the 18th Dynasty. It has close parallels with Psalm 10. Here is an extract:

When thou settest in the western rim of heaven

The earth is clothed in darkness like the dead

The lion cometh forth from his lair

The serpents hiss. Darkness reigns...

The earth is bright when thou risest once more

The two lands rejoice in daily festival,

Refreshed and standing on their feet...

Then throughout the world men work.

How manifold are all thy works!

They are hidden from our gaze.

Oh, thou sole god, whose powers are unequalled,

Thou didst create the earth according to thy will, being alone:

Men, all creatures, large and small,

All things that dwell upon the earth.

Though linked here to the element of Fire, Atum, more accurately represents the underlying cohesion—the integrity, if you like—of our planet. At the end of time he will restore it to the watery abyss (Nu) whence it sprang.

[22](#) Khopri was said to have carried Ra on his journey through the the night. This may be why Aleister Crowley linked him to the hours of darkness, whereas Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, original (but not always dependable) translator of the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* (1895) associated him with the dawn. The rising Sun is also depicted as Ra-Horakhti or Ra of the Two Horizons when he sometimes appears as the falcon-headed god, Horus.

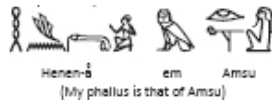
[23](#) The concept of self-begotten insects was a very common one in the ancient world. In the fourth book of *Georgics* (29BC), Virgil assures readers that bees materialize from the putrid blood of slaughtered cattle. He goes on to say that Egyptian apiarists often obtained their bees this way (*Georgics* iv. 295 ff.). Autogenesis was accepted by some biologists as late as the eighteenth century.

[24](#) Hathor, or the Vault of Heaven, means ‘The House of Horus’, as can be inferred from its glyph .

[25](#) Once it has set, the sun's hieroglyphic emblem is the same as that of Osiris(). In later texts Osiris is also associated with the moon, who by reflecting sunlight becomes the sun's representative at night.

[26](#) In that case the following is spoken by:

i) the male adept/active partner



Such was the sexuality of Amsu, a deity (known also as Min) from the earliest predynastic times, that he was said to be the father of his own mother

(ii) the female/passive partner



The orgasm should be visualized as an outpouring of the particular intention under the appearance of molten gold.

ASTRAL PROJECTION

Ceremonial magic such as that described in the last chapter is something anyone can do, but it does help if you happen to believe in what you are doing. It is all very well warning the aspiring occultist that he should not expect his ritual work to be routinely accompanied by signs and wonders, but unless something out of the ordinary happens once in a while, he is bound to sooner or later ask himself whether it is all worth the effort. It is true, of course, that the effectiveness of a magical operation can always be verified, but results may be slow in coming. In the meantime the novice magician is left with the uncomfortable feeling that the pentacles, invocations and sundry names of power are just a load of mumbo-jumbo. Such a reaction is perfectly understandable, especially as all good occultists are gifted with a healthy streak of scepticism. But scepticism is liable to run riot. This can happen at any time; for example, you may, as you think, be engrossed in your ritual when all of a sudden the assembled esoterica strike you as being ridiculously out of place in the familiar surroundings of your room. Or the sound of a neighbour's television set or the noise of a car in the street outside will bring you back to earth with a bump, at once feeling rather embarrassed by the whole business.

Feelings of this sort are hard to avoid. The danger is that they may persuade you to abandon your occult studies before you have properly embarked on them. Fortunately, there is less chance of this happening if you prepare yourself for the inevitable uncertainties that will at some time or other assail you. Try to remember that everyone, no matter what they are doing, has occasional moments of doubt wondering if their time might not be more profitably employed elsewhere. And these are the more frequent when one is engaged in something that lacks the utilitarian goal of most everyday activity.

As far as magic is concerned one cause of such difficulties is that we are dealing with a dimension of which few of us have direct experience. For years we go through life blissfully unaware of the astral world, then one day our interest in occultism requires us to accept this novel concept of existence. The mental readjustment needed is far from easy, indeed all the more difficult because at the commencement of our magical training we

must take the astral world entirely on trust. It might, of course, be argued that those who have never visited the Welsh village of Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwillllantysiliogogogoch have likewise to take its existence on trust, but the comparison is specious. The reports of people who know the place, myself among them, are sufficiently numerous to warrant acceptance, and in any case the reality of ‘Llanfairpwll’, as the locals sensibly call it, is capable of verification. Not so the astral world. Here all we have are the recorded and often contradictory impressions of a few magicians, none of which can be independently confirmed. That said, the case for it is not quite as hopeless as it appears, since the process known as astral projection offers all of us a chance to discover its existence for ourselves.

Astral projection is the means by which we are enabled to transfer our consciousness to what appears to be an intangible likeness of ourselves—an etheric double, so to speak—and make it responsive to our will. As was said earlier, the experience of finding yourself outside your physical body will be one of the most thrilling you may have, one that will persuade you, as nothing else can, that there are more things in heaven and earth than conventional science, quantum physics apart, has yet been willing to concede.

Unfortunately, although some people manage astral projection at the first attempt, there are others who find they must wait months, sometimes years, before they step out of themselves and into what Aleister Crowley liked to call their body of light. It is an experience similar to that reported by people who have had what is nowadays labelled a Near Death Experience (NDE), but thankfully it is one the rest of us can similarly experience with practice. The trouble is that the final piece of mental gymnastics needed to dislodge our consciousness is a knack that cannot be taught. Yet it is something everyone may acquire with diligent practice so there is certainly no need to feel despondent if you're unsuccessful to start with.

In [Chapter 1](#) we discussed at length the nature of the astral body. (In retrospect I wish we'd found a better name for it.) There it was described as a thought-form, basically our awareness of ourselves, moulded from, or possibly impressed upon, the etheric fabric that ‘surrounds’ us. Many names have been given to this thought-engendered body, their prevalence suggesting its existence was known from universal experience.¹ There is

also no shortage of books on astral projection, though some are unreliable and you'd do well to read only the best of them.² It goes without saying that the more you understand about what you are trying to do, the greater your chances of success. It is as well, therefore, to familiarize yourself with the subject beforehand. That said, some things need to be clarified first.

In your reading you will find that most authors treat the astral body as a sort of adjunct to the physical body, implying that men are born with it intact. My own view, set out in Chapter I, is that it is rather a product of our thinking. Were it something we were born with, given the fact of evolution, one would necessarily have to suppose that every crow, cow, stickleback or camel likewise has its own etheric double, not to mention all the bugs, beetles and bacteria in existence. To deny it to them would be to imply human beings are inherently different, endowed with a supernatural accessory that elevates them above the rest of brute creation. There is no evidence for this. This is why Marie-Louise von Franz, closest collaborator of Carl-Gustav Jung and herself a gifted psychologist, spent the final years of her life consolidating her astral double. By reflecting—one might even say working—on it rather than taking it for granted, she sought to ensure that when she died it would be as familiar and as welcoming as a warm pair of slippers.

Another theory canvassed by some writers on astral projection, especially those with occult leanings, is that the astral body is one of several supra-physical bodies with which we are equipped. They then go on to list one bodily sheath after the next until the poor reader must feel he has more layers to him than an onion has skins. Little attempt is made to justify the theory except by ingenuous references to arcane tradition,³ one whose defenders all too often believe in original sin on a cosmic scale, labelled the 'primary deviation', as well as life on Venus, the Holy Grail⁴ and—of which more later—the lost continents of Lemuria and Atlantis. All of which goes to show that salt has more uses in magic than warding off demons.

Nowadays few of us are aware of our 'thought body', let alone the countless variants wished upon us by occultists. If, however, we are to practice astral projection we must give this subtle body the benefit of the doubt and acknowledge its existence. Unless we do so we shall never

persuade our consciousness to vacate our physical body. It will, after all, be reluctant to take a leap into the void. Astral projection is hard enough as it is.

Luckily we can make things a little easier by practising one of the visualization exercises mentioned earlier. It is the one which involved 'looking' at a room from positions other than that occupied by the physical body. This is only an *imagined* projection of consciousness, but proficiency at it will go a long way towards helping you accomplish the real thing. It is important therefore that you work at this psychological trick until it becomes second nature.

There are several ways of attempting projection itself, but leaving aside differences of detail, three merit our particular attention.

The first achieves swift results if the experimenter is at all sensitive or impressionable. Basically it entails visualizing the astral body—perhaps a flimsier, translucent version of oneself—and then by an effort of will, projecting one's consciousness into the visualized form. If you are at all psychic, this is the method to adopt, since it is quite possible the form you visualize will be the etheric double perceived clairvoyantly. On the other hand, if like most of us you have to use your imagination to visualize the form, the latter will integrate with the astral body as soon as projection occurs.

The form you imagine will of course be yourself, but it helps considerably if the figure has its back to you, for this spares you the surprisingly difficult task of visualizing your own features. When the form has been built up, it must be charged with energy by imagining a shaft of light flowing into it, or if you prefer the same light can be channeled into your physical body and thence directed into the visualized form beside you. This latter method has the advantage of increasing your identification with the form you have created so as to make it easier to transfer your consciousness into it. Begin by making the form move at your command, raising its arm, turning to left and right, etc. At last when your rapport with it is complete, draw on the last reserves of your imagination and step out of your body.

The second method involves no visualized forms, but a certain amount of imagination is again required. You should lie on your back, relax your body completely and imagine that you are gently floating upwards. Some people suggest you begin with your feet, imagining these rising slowly in

the air followed by the rest of your body, while others maintain that the imagined levitation begins from the base of the skull. Whichever happens, you will suddenly find that the sensation of floating on air becomes so real that you at once know you have vacated the physical body. The astral form will then right itself from its horizontal position, enabling you to look down at your replica, seemingly asleep on the bed.

Another way of achieving the same result is to will yourself to a different part of the room, as you have done so often in your meditation exercises. If your reserves of willpower are less than abundant, it is a good idea to eat something salty before going to bed so you are left with a powerful thirst. Place a glass of water conspicuously on the other side of the room and while lying on the bed fix your mind upon it. With luck, the urge to quench your thirst will give your sleeping consciousness the shove needed to transfer it to your astral double.

There is also a third, less reliable, method of projection that becomes possible once you realize in the middle of a dream that you are indeed dreaming. Known as lucid dreaming, it happens when the dreamer finds himself empowered to adjust the narrative of his dream according to his preference, thereby becoming, as it were, the author of the experiences his dream self is undergoing. (Note that some psychologists remain sceptical, arguing that the dreamer adapts the dream experience during brief, but unremarked, moments of wakefulness.) Several occultists claim that the dreamer's consciousness has in reality been 'projected' into the dream, and were he to wake up, he would find himself inhabiting his astral body. The challenge is to wake up on time.

Additional details on how best to effect astral projection are provided at the end of this chapter. Beforehand a few words must be said about what to expect when you are outside your physical body.

The first thing you will notice, if the writer's experience be typical, is that your surroundings are bathed in a violet monochrome, though occasionally the scene is sepia-coloured, as in an old Victorian photograph. A curious phenomenon is that the objects around you may appear to emit a radiance of their own, one you will quickly grow accustomed to.

It is essential that you dissociate yourself fully from your physical body, since in the early days your consciousness will seek to re-inhabit it at every opportunity. There is certainly no need to fear you may forever stay locked out of it. On the contrary, you will have your work cut out trying to remain

outside. You may well find that much of the pull tugging you back into the physical body comes from a silver cord or thread that unites it with its astral double. This cord may be semi-solid in appearance or else little more than a faint trail of vapour. Forget the old story derived from the Old Testament⁵ that death occurs once the cord is severed. You may be assured that no amount of tugging on your part is going to break it.

When for the first time you do manage to stay outside your body you may find that you are in danger of being carried off by the ‘magnetic’ tides which flow through the ether. To stop this happening you must assert your control over the astral vehicle and stay put. Not that you will not wish to remain stationary for long since the whole object of astral projection is to go places. The astral body, it is claimed, can journey anywhere in the physical world, but is not clear to what extent such travelling is limited, if at all, to constraints of time and space. Because of your magical interests it is more likely that your liberated self will seek to voyage in that suprasensible reality which is, after all, its natural habitat. The mere wish, you will find, is enough to superimpose the astral landscape on the physical surroundings about you. The bluish haze mentioned earlier will then give way to a world as real and full of colour as the everyday world with which you are familiar.

Once out of the body you can travel in the physical world or else confine your itinerary to the etheric planes. Where you choose to go in the physical world is your own business and need not detain us further. As for the etheric planes, two options present themselves. The first is a journey through the astral world as represented by the Tree of Life. For the more serious-minded this is astral travel proper, symbolically experienced and spiritually instructive. The second, while it still takes place on the etheric planes, involves travelling through time to see places in the physical world as they were centuries, even millennia, ago. For convenience occultists refer to this as the Akashic Record—we have met the term before—but it would be too simplistic to regard it as merely flitting backwards through time.⁶

Let us return to the astral world. When you first contemplate the vista before you, it will reassure you to discover how familiar it seems. In terms of the sefiroth—to take the Kabbalistic system as our Baedeker—you are in the region of Yesod, and more precisely, that area which Egyptophile occultists call the Antechamber of Osiris. This is where the dead pass their

time between incarnations, gratifying their whims and unconsciously shedding the aggregate personality of their previous incarnation in the process. Here you may glimpse the faces of people you have known and loved, but you are unlikely to linger among them for long. Instead your astral body will be swept onwards to the next sefira. As you proceed, the scenery will resemble less and less the physical world you left behind. Instead you will find yourself in an exciting place where light and colour rather than form predominate. Certain shapes will nevertheless appear from time to time and, thanks to your acquaintance with hermetic correspondences, these will inform you of your whereabouts in relation to the Tree of Life.

The things you see and hear from then on are incapable of description, since language cannot express or accommodate the ineffable experiences that await you. To recount them would necessitate translating them into words derived from sensory experience, which of course is precisely what they are *not*. The problem is an ancient one and has plagued mystics who, try as they might, could never convey the sublimity of their vision in language comprehensible to their fellow men. Suffice to say that you will encounter many wonders—all of them ineffable—when you tread the psychedelic rainbows of the astral world.

Psychedelic rainbows notwithstanding, there will be readers more attracted by the possibilities of time-travel. This is a pity, for although time-travel is interesting, it seldom does more than satisfy the curiosity of those who indulge in it. But then an occasional time-journey will certainly do you no harm provided, if you value your reputation, you forebear from boasting about it to sceptical friends. Let us briefly examine the mechanics.

Time-travel becomes feasible because the traveller's consciousness, no longer a function of his brain, has quit the physical world where chronology depends on an assumed relationship between time and space. In that world our notion of time is subjective, being relative always to the person whose experience serves to measure it. In the astral world, by contrast, the limitations of a three-dimensional reality no longer apply. Instead our consciousness dwells in what may be called absolute time, an eternal present which embraces both past and future as well. Evidence of absolute time and our ability to access it comes from precognition, something we shall examine later. For now we need admit only that our

consciousness divested of physical constraints is freed also from the temporal restrictions these normally impose on it.

And yet our minds are so conditioned by these restrictions that the astral self will often remain voluntarily subject to them. The whole idea of a coexistent past, present and future is so alien to it that we are wont to carry our old ideas about relative time into the astral world. Indeed, many astral voyagers who desperately want to travel through time find they never succeed in doing so because of a deep-rooted conviction that it is impossible. The antidote is to reflect at length on the nature—nay, the *illusion*—of time, to read some of the admittedly difficult books on the subject and, more importantly, familiarize yourself with astral conditions. You will then cease to relate to what experience of the physical world has taught you. Once you fully accept the theoretical possibility of time-travel, it only remains to take flight.

Such is the subjective (and thus individual) nature of the experience that there are few general rules to impart. It may be useful, however, to look at a typical time-journey, in this case one undertaken by a friend who has allowed me to quote her own account, written, as all magical records should be, immediately after the event.

Apart from expanding a few abbreviations (shown in square brackets), I have not altered her report in any way. I must emphasize, however, that it is offered by way of example only and not as evidence of time-travel. I should explain too that my friend—let us call her Ann—lived in Croydon, just outside London, and one day in 1960 decided she would like to see her home town as it was some half a century before. She knew, of course, that ‘some half a century’ was far too imprecise so went back exactly fifty years and selected a date, September 24th, which chanced to be her mother's birthday. As for the time, four in the afternoon seemed a good hour to pick, and here in her own words is what happened:

7.15. *Formed Q.B.L. and Lux Mir.*⁷ *Very drowsy—probably too much supper. Afraid I might drop off to sleep, but projected after about ten minutes. Rid myself of spare astrophasm*⁸ *and passed into A.W. [astral world]. Before entering too far into Y [Yesod] willed myself at Croydon, 4.0 p.m., 24 September 1910. Everything went dark but a small light started flashing in the distance. As I got near, saw a shape with a curlew's head (Thoth?).*⁹ *Lights began sparkling*

all over the place—all colours like a kaleidoscope. Experienced an unpleasant bursting feeling and then darkness again. Gradually the darkness changed into a blackboard with the date 24 September scrawled in chalk across it. Before it appeared a young woman, hair piled up and a cameo brooch at her throat. She was laughing, but no noise came out. After a while she picked up a blue gingham duster and wiped the board. Cloud of dust rose up—blinding, choking. I shut my eyes.

When I opened them, I knew I'd made it.

My first surprise came with the sight of so many horse-drawn vehicles. And the ripe smell of horses! (You'd never suspect that from old photos.) I was standing outside an ironmonger's—there were some strange-looking teapots (samovars?) and coffee percolators on display in the window. The people passing on the pavement seemed to walk straight through me which was a bit unnerving to begin with. Most of the men had moustaches or beards, with fancy watch chains much in evidence on their waistcoats. The women had long skirts and long-sleeved blouses. Thought I might be dreaming so as I knew I might not be staying long I tried to find my bearings. The ironmongers was called Hammond and Hussey which rang a bell. Across the road I caught sight of some posters plastered on a wall. No sooner had I noticed them than I was over there. A little black and white dog skedaddled as if he'd sensed my arrival. He almost tripped up a clergyman as he went. (Thought: Did the dog run away at that exact moment in 1910? I suppose he must have done. If so, was I there then to frighten him? Again the answer must be 'Yes'. Presumably one cannot change the past, but the past when it was the present could, I suppose, be affected by the future. All v.v. metaphysical.) Back to the posters. One of them was advertising 'the greatest show on earth', Lord John (George, surely?) Sanger's circus. It was due to visit the town on Friday, 30 September (which makes the 24th a Saturday, hence the busy street). There were some other posters there—for the Electric Theatre and 'choice animated pictures', another for a cinema in Thornton Heath. I can't remember the second cinema's name (Essoldo?), but I remember it promised to pay its patrons' tram fares from Corydon and serve free teas between five and six. Anything for business.

There were some other posters there. (I spent too much time looking at posters.) One was for 'American roller skates', another for a variety show, its star billed as the queen of the fairies. (I thought I'd remember the lady's name, but can't for the life of me think of it.).

Next I turned to the street again. Saw a van advertising Jay's Furniture Stores. There appeared to be advertisements everywhere—on walls, shop windows and carts. Rather a mess. Everything looked less orderly than it does now. But much more character. Found I was in the old High Road and realized what a lot of changes there had been. That did it. The instant I thought of modern Croydon I blacked out straight-away and began to spin like a top. In the darkness I glimpsed a rag doll in a dark pink dress also spinning madly. I think the black and white dog was barking somewhere as well. A terrible pain deep inside my ears—the sort you'd get in an unpressurized aircraft. All of a sudden—in a flash of vivid blue light—I saw my room again. With a painful click¹⁰ I was back in the body. Woke up straightaway still with headache and heart thumping thirteen to the dozen. The time was 7.45. I can't have been 'out' more than five minutes. Began this record at ten to eight and it's now eight-o'clock. Everything still very clear except for those names that have gone clean out of my head.

3 June, 8.30 a.m. This morning woke up convinced that the first name of the fairy queen was Elsie something. She was queening it at the New Hippodrome. Forgot to mention last night that the price of admission to the cinema was 3d., children 2d.

Some people may feel that Ann was somewhat unambitious when she decided to visit the Croydon of the early twentieth century. It is not hard to think of more interesting excursions she might have embarked on while she was about it. No doubt too readers can think of many famous scenes from history at which, given the opportunity, they would like to be present. But travel to historical events demands some expertise. The greatest difficulty about it is that the astral traveler will already have his own idea of what things were like at, say, the first ever production of Hamlet, the storming of the Bastille, or Ford's Theatre on the night Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. This means his consciousness will tend to hover uncertainly between the actual happening and its own preconceived notion of what took place. When this occurs the astral journey usually transforms

itself into a self-induced dream. It is far better, at least to start with, to know where you are going but to have no very clear idea of what to expect when you get there.

In Ann's case it is true that having lived in Croydon, she may have seen what it previously looked like from old photographs, but as photographs depict the real thing, such knowledge would have done her no harm. On the contrary, it may even have helped. Where things do go wrong is when our idea of the destination we have chosen is based on a subjective reconstruction—our own or other people's—which can never be completely accurate. It is this that often deflects the astral traveller from his destination.

It might also be argued that Ann's adventure was really no more than what was described earlier as a lucid dream. You will recall that she herself recognized this possibility in the middle of it. Ann's reaction was a sensible one, however, for she began at once to make a careful note of her surroundings, paying particular attention to small details of the sort that might be verified later. She did not waste time looking at the ladies' dresses or the gentlemen's moustaches; these would have provided her with good 'period' recollections but would have convinced no one, not even herself, of the reality of her experience.

Ann carefully examined the posters plastered on a wall, peered at shop windows and noted names and dates. Then she was able to check up on what she had seen. She discovered, for example, that the Thornton Heath cinema, the Electric Palace (not the Essoldo), had in fact paid its patrons' tram fares. She learned too that the better known 'Lord' George Sanger had a younger brother named John who toured England with his own circus, though Ann never did find out if it ever visited Croydon. In the end, enough details had been corroborated to convince her that she had on this occasion travelled back through time. She has now promised herself a return trip in order to see what was the full name of the young lady billed as the Queen of the Fairies.

Among the lessons to emerge from this example is the need to be completely objective about your time-journeys. If you accept them without question you will be unable to distinguish dreams from reality. Time-travel, never forget, is concerned only with reality. For this reason any experiment not capable of some degree of verification must, I fear, be regarded as unproven.

Some further points deserve mention. When first aware of your astral body you will doubtless 'see' it fully clothed, although to talk of clothing suggests, as does the term body, that the astral double is closer to its physical partner than is actually the case. It is true that, as perceived by our imagination, it is a replica of our flesh-and-blood selves, but being immaterial it is necessarily of an entirely different nature. This becomes easier to understand if we think of it in terms of light.

Let us imagine you are about to take a photograph of someone standing about ten feet from of the camera. As you press the button the variation in light-waves caused by the physical presence of whoever you are photographing will register on a piece of sensitized film, imposing on it the likeness of the person photographed. The astral body is comparable to the light-waves travelling between a photographic subject and the film inside the camera. Like them it is essentially formless, and to that extent imperceptible to our senses. When our consciousness 'sees' the astral body, it registers the effect of its existence in much the same as a film registers a disturbance in light-waves. In other words, our thinking formalizes the objectively formless. At the same time it imposes upon it—out of habit perhaps—supplementary details of its own so that when our clairvoyant vision 'sees' the astral body, for example, it generally appears to be fully clothed.

Some readers may still be wondering how the astral body can indulge in the luxury of thinking, since its consciousness is divorced from the brain where our thoughts normally originate. The answer lies in the fundamental difference between the astral and material modes of existence. On the material plane it is to be expected—nothing would be more natural—that thought involves a physiological, indeed electro-chemical, process inside the brain. Such, however, is not the case in the astral world. There, in an aspatial, because supra-dimensional, environment, the brain has no role to play. Instead our consciousness receives and responds to information directly conveyed to it.

Some newcomers to occultism often wonder whether physical imperfections are automatically reproduced in the astral body, and still grimmer, in whatever post-mortem body we shall inhabit. Such thinking again betrays a mistaken emphasis on the 'bodily' aspect of the astral self, though recourse to words like 'double' and 'replica' do little to diminish it. By now it should be clear, however, that the astral body is the double not

of our physical bodies, but of our *identity*. The trouble is our mind is so accustomed to thinking of our identity in corporeal terms, that we appear to see a physical likeness on the etheric strata. With the demise of the physical body, however, this astral impression ceases to be appropriate. Our consciousness becomes reconciled to its discarnate identity and has no further need for any formal representation. It is true that for a time it may cling out of habit to a faithful replica of its physical body, and spiritualistic revenants will often speak of themselves as if still clothed in flesh. However, this is a short-lived habit, especially in the case of those who, because of illness or deformity, have no cause for wishing to retain a post-mortem likeness of their former physical selves.

As to the actual passage of consciousness into the astral body at the moment of death, this is something we shall examine later. For the present our interest lies in the temporary transition which takes place during astral projection. The time-tables given below are what might be called a five-day course in projection. It is not essential that you follow it, but your chances of early success will be enhanced if you stick to a routine such as this rather than make one or two desultory attempts every now and again. For the purpose of the time-table we have taken 11 p.m. as the hour at which projection will be essayed. The exact time, however, will be a matter of individual choice, although care must be taken to keep to the same hour each day if possible. It is also important to maintain a record of your experiences, so have a notebook and pencil handy.

Once you have acquired the knack of projection your need for a special time-table will cease and you can then project as and when you please. The purpose of the time-table is simply to help you find the all-important knack. You will observe that the preliminaries tend to become progressively more complicated, but if you meet with success at the first or second attempt, you certainly don't need to stay the course. Neither should you give up if you have got nowhere by the fifth attempt. There is always the second method to be tried and if that too fails, you can return to the first with renewed vigour. It might be a good idea to have a rest for a week or more between each five-day marathon, although some argue that projection is more likely when the physical body is debilitated. (This may account for some, but by no means all, Near Death Experiences.) That said, unless you are on a month's magical retreat it would be foolish to

exhaust yourself unnecessarily—especially if, like most of us, you must get up and go to work the following morning.

Bon Voyage!

METHOD I

Days 1 and 2

10.30 p.m.	Light incense and candles
10.35	Perform Kabbalistic Cross, then sit or lie down
10.40	Practise projection of consciousness to various parts of the room
10.45	Relaxation
10.50	Commence visualization of astral form
10.55	Bombard form with visualized ‘ketheric’ light
11.00	Transfer consciousness to form

Day 3

7.00 p.m.	Period of fasting begins, interrupted only by one small glass of saline solution drunk every hour on the hour until—
10.00	Reflect on the Tree of Life and sefiroth as guides to the astral world
10.30	Light candles and incense
10.35	Perform Kabbalistic Cross and Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram
10.50	Visualization of the astral form
11.00	Projection and relocation of consciousness

Day 4

7.00 p.m.	Period of silence and fasting begins. a little wine or a tisane of mildly sedative herbs may be taken every half hour until—
10.00	Light candles and incense

	Smear <i>Oleum Magicum</i> (see Appendix 1) on forehead, wrists and throat
	Perform Kabbalistic Cross and Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram
10.30	Relaxation and meditation on the astral world
10.55	Visualization of the astral form
11.00	Projection

Day 5

7.00 p.m.	Period of silence and fasting
10.00	Light candles and incense
	Apply <i>Oleum Magicum</i> (as for Day 4)
10.15	Lunar ritual. This may be performed with the intention of achieving successful projection after the ritual is over as indicated below, or coincidentally with the (non-sexual) climax of the rite
10.55	Visualization of the astral form
11.00	Projection

METHOD 2

Day 1

10.30 p.m.	Relaxation. The room should be dark but one candle may be burned. Incense or a conventional joss stick may also be lit if the adept feels it helps.
10.40	Mantra. This continuous repetition of certain words will gently lull the conscious mind and activate its subconscious. The mantra may be something of the adept's own invention or one of many mantric utterances designed to induce euphoria. They include the Hindu invocation of <i>Hari Krishna</i> , the Buddhist <i>Om Mani Padme Hum</i> ('Oh Jewel of the flower of the Lotus'), ^{11} or the Lotanic mantra of the Kabbalists. ^{12} A

	mantra especially suitable for the task in hand would be the Latin <i>Progredior ad lucem siderum</i>
10.55	Imagined levitation
11.00	Actual projection.

Day 2

10.00 p.m.	Relaxation and meditation on the astral body. Yoga enthusiasts should meditate on the chakra Svadhisthana, located in the spleen
10.30	Kabbalistic Cross and donning of the Crown of Abramelin ¹³
10.35	Mantra (as above)
10.50	Imagined levitation
11.00	Actual levitation

Day 3

A for Day 2

A magical oil should be worn

Fast and silence to be observed from 9.00 p.m.

Day 4 and 5

10.00 p.m.	As for Day 3
	The adept should perform an Egyptian ritual at sunset, or a lunar ritual provided the Moon is not waning at the time the it rises. The intention will be successful astral projection.

¹ The ‘travelling soul’, as it was called, appears as a mannikin or just as often an insect in Indian art, while in ancient Greece it was usually depicted as a butterfly. Elsewhere in Europe it has been represented as a dove, although in Egypt hawks, owls and ravens were favourite images for it.

² Many books have been written on astral projection or OBS (Out of the Body States). That said, the old classics—books I avidly read as a schoolboy (and they were old even then!)—still remain the best. Reliable, as well as instructive, is anything by Hereward Carrington and Sylvan Muldoon, notably their collaborative *Projection of the Astral Body* (where Muldoon's own experiences are described) and *The Phenomena of Astral Projection*, as well as work by Oliver Fox. More recent is

Robert Peterson's *Out of Body experiences: how to have them and what to expect*, which contains advice and a matter-of-fact account of the writer's own adventures.

[3](#) Madame Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner (who copied her but pretended he didn't) attributed to human beings several subtle layers, a notion derived from Buddhist and Vedantic teachings. In these the astral body (*Ling'a S'ari-ra*) is linked to the one of the five sheaths or *koshas* that envelop us, in this case the *prana maya kosha*.

[4](#) Bereft of its specifically Christian associations, the Grail, identified by neopagans with the Cauldron of Ceridwen, becomes a chalice brimful of astral concentrates. These are alleged to have also been stored in the Ark of Covenant, presumably alongside Aaron's rod, a pot of manna and the Torah scrolls penned by Moses (*Revelation* xi, 19). One account has it that when the temple was sacked in A.D. 70, the Ark was found to contain only pebbles and some badger skins dyed purple. Others maintain it had by then been carried off to among other places, Chartres, Rennes le Château, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and the West Coast of Ireland. Indiana Jones fans know that Harrison Ford discovered it in Egypt.

[5](#) See *Ecclesiastes*, xii 6, 7: 'Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.'

[6](#) From the Sanskrit 'akasha' (Ākāśa), it refers to a universal medium of which the physical world, typified by the four elements, is essentially part. Because it is multidimensional, past, present and future exist simultaneously within akasha, not sequentially as they now do for us. This notion became popular among Theosophists in the eighteen-nineties and was later taken up by Rudolf Steiner. Many of the latter's teachings derive from his clairvoyant 'reading' of the Akashic record, or as he preferred to call it, the Akashic Chronicle. For him, as well as for Dion Fortune (see [Appendix 3](#)) and the American visionary Edward Cayce (1977-1945), a cherished part of that record related to Atlantis. Sadly, little of the information they relay to us about the lost civilisation is credible. Others who have peeped into the akashic record, unwittingly perhaps, were the Bavarian visionary and stigmatist, Therese Neumann, who claimed to have witnessed the Passion of Christ, and Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824) whose account of, among other things, first century Ephesus reportedly enabled archaeologists to locate the site where the Virgin Mary spent her final years. It has since been visited by several Popes, most recently Pope Benedict XVI in 2006. Emmerich claimed also to have visited to the Garden of Eden, encountering there 'gigantic white beasts', though not, it would seem, Edward Cayce who claimed to have journeyed to the same destination and indeed to have actually lived there in a previous life. Such accounts, like Steiner's revelations about Atlantis give the Akashic record a bad name. It deserves better.

[7](#) The kabbalistic cross and Lux Mirabilis. The latter is an exercise beloved of many Western occultists. It involves visualizing the body slowly enveloped in coils of ketheric light, rather like a mummy in its wrappings.

[8](#) This is a word some occultists use to describe the 'stuff' of which their visible astral bodies are apparently composed. What Ann means here is that she willed her astral body to disengage itself from the physical shell so as to resist the 'pull' we mentioned earlier. When she did this her astral body would have shed some of its etheric 'substance' which was then channeled into the silver cord. It is this process to which Ann maybe referring when she speaks of 'getting rid' of superfluous astrophasm.

[9](#) Thoth was known as the Measurer of Time. He had an ibis head, not a curlew's. Both the ibis and the curlew have long beaks, but unlike the dull-brown curlew the ibis has a fine white plumage and a jet-black neck.

[10](#) This click is something many people claim to hear when their consciousness rejoins their physical body. I know of no explanation for it, though it has been suggested—for reasons which

escape me—that the proximity of the brain to the inner ear may account for it.

[11](#) Associated in Mahayana Buddhism with Avalokiteshvara, most compassionate of the Bodhisattvas, and usually (but perhaps erroneously) translated as ‘Oh Jewel in the Eye of the Lotus’, this mantra, recited often enough, is held to bring exemption from the sequence of death and rebirth.

[12](#) *Genesis* xxxvi, 22. All the mantra means is ‘And Lotan's sister was Timna’. A Midrashic tradition insists, however, that recitation of the original Hebrew (חמבע, לושן ואחות) furthers one's hopes and ambitions, thanks to subtle vibrations in each sound.

[13](#) This magical square consists of a piece of parchment—a strip of bandage will do—on which the words

MILON

IRAGO

LAMAL

OGARI

NOLIM

are written. Placed on the forehead, it is said to encourage astral projection, as well as endow the wearer with knowledge of all things past, present and future.

TALISMANIC MAGIC

Magicians have never been too fussy about mentioning their sources, probably because many are non-existent or none too respectable. Instead, they refer vaguely to ‘tradition’—arcane, esoteric or venerable—whenever a statement seems in need of support. There is little risk in doing so. Better still, it suggests to the reader something revealed long ago, for example, at Eleusis, and thereafter cherished by a few privileged initiates. Such a tradition is ten times more satisfying than an unromantic footnote or a reluctant reference to a rival's textbook. However, I am glad to be in a position to describe exactly how I came across the information contained in this chapter.

Years ago, while living in Strasbourg, I managed to secure an introduction to someone, elderly and notoriously reclusive, who was reputed to be an alchemist. His home, as well as his workshop, located only after much difficulty, was in a narrow, run-down street near the Rue Neuve, close to an almost stagnant stretch of canal. Some of the houses in this neighborhood actually backed on to the murky green water and all possessed a melancholic charm. Hunched together, barely able to support their steep roofs, they seemed to decay before one's eyes. Exactly the sort of place where, as in Prague's Golden Lane, one might expect an alchemist to live. By now the area has been gentrified and the houses are today worth a fortune, itself, I suppose, a transmutation of sorts. (I discovered later that the Zlatá ulička in Prague has likewise been prettified.)

I expected my alchemist to be tall, ascetic-looking, probably bearded and certainly grave in speech and manner. On my arrival, however, I was greeted by a cheerful old gentleman whose portly figure and pince-nez, the latter the first I'd seen in real-life, made him look like a ‘Phiz’ etching of Mr. Pickwick. His merry features betrayed no sign of the long and arduous hours spent at his spagyric labours. On the contrary, they seemed quite cherubic, his gaze a trifle worldly-wise perhaps, but cherubic nevertheless.^{[1](#)}

Around us was a confusion of jars, retorts, alembics and cylinders, with coloured liquids bubbling away contentedly. Despite the heat, the air, I noticed, was filled with a bracing scent which somehow reminded me of

ozone or the smell of light rain on a warm summer's day. I have since learned that this atmosphere is characteristic of alchemical laboratories when the Great Work is nearing completion. I do not know if my alchemist knew he was on the verge of success, but if he did, he gave no sign of it. Instead, having observed my interest in a small talisman lying on a workbench near a kiln, he began to talk freely about its manufacture. And that is how, as I watched the old boy pottering about, testing pressures and observing temperatures, I learned about talismanic magic. Since then I have read a great deal on the subject, but my reading has added little of substance to what I learned that afternoon. What follows is but part of it.

Most of us have at some time or other put our faith in an object we think may bring us luck. For years I'd turn up at interviews wearing the pair of socks I chanced to have on when I passed my school certificate exams upon turning fifteen. Darned and shrunken, they saw me through school and university until they eventually disintegrated during an unsuccessful driving test. It is doubtful whether the socks themselves possessed any special talismanic virtue but I do know that my faith in them calmed my nerves, and with the exception of the driving test, improved my performance. All over the world talismans and amulets inspire a similar confidence in people from all walks of life, most of whom feel they need a little extra help to cope with the challenges they face.

But the efficacy of a talisman does not depend entirely on the faith its owner invests in it. There exist talismans which, unlike my late-lamented socks, contain a magical power that is their very own. Their effect may be subjective, it is true, but some succeed not merely because of the confidence they inspire, but because of their inherent virtue. These are the talismans we shall examine in this chapter, the rest being psychological boosters and nothing more.

The real magical talisman can be said to resemble a self-recharging battery. At the time of its preparation a propitious combination of supernatural influences, each appropriate to its purpose, endows it with a kind of magical energy. The exact nature of this energy will depend on the magician's reasons for wanting the talisman, but once acquired, or, to put it another way, once the talisman has been 'charged', it will proceed on the principle of universal sympathy to attract a flow of similar energy from outside. This means that while a talisman is expending energy to further a

particular cause, it also draws into itself sufficient new energy to sustain that function.

Thus a talisman works in a positive way, attracting the forces necessary to create whatever effect its owner desires. An amulet, on the other hand, has the more 'negative' function of neutralizing certain causes before they produce an unwelcome effect. To some extent both achieve the same result: an amulet that wards off illness is, after all, doing much the same thing as a talisman created to procure good health. In other words it is more passive in its function. That said, although this chapter is called Talismanic Magic, we will deal with amuletic magic also. Indeed, we may occasionally offend purists by using both words without distinction.²

We shall also look briefly at curses which, like talismanic magic, are intended to attract causes desired by the magician but whose effect is detrimental to another's well-being. That such magic is morally questionable need hardly be stated, but to ignore it would be to overlook the vindictiveness endemic in many human beings. That said, I do not recommend its practice; if the adept's good nature is not enough to restrain him, then he would do well to reflect that any malign force generated may well recoil on him, if for any reason deflected from its target. Even when curses do their job, the hate and malice invested in their preparation will remain with the adept for a long time after, souring his character and more dangerously leaving him vulnerable to similar feelings from without.

As in the case of other magical work, the manufacture of talismans rests on the assumption that currents of suprasensible energy may be diverted to the world of dense matter and there effect changes desired (or 'willed') by the magician. In short, the talisman is an object capable both of earthing the required force and of rendering it effective on the physical plane.

The magician's task is to endow whatever piece of stone, metal or parchment he has chosen for his purpose with the talismanic qualities needed to make it function. First he must decide precisely what he wants his talisman to accomplish. A glance at the Table of Intentions will then reveal to him which group of planetary correspondences are appropriate.

Let us once more assume that love is the thing he desires most, with Venus the planet most likely to procure it. He discerns from the Table of Correspondences that copper is the metal on which to engrave his talisman, since that is sacred to Venus, and that green is the corresponding colour, so that should copper be unobtainable, he may at a pinch make do

with a sheet of green paper.³ The other correspondences are then fitted in as appropriate. It is important, for instance, that the construction of the talisman take place when Venus is at her most benign. The adept will take care therefore to calculate the most auspicious time for its manufacture, just as he would set about timing a Venusian ritual. In this case, you will remember, he would be likely to choose a Friday at the hour of Venus, when that planet was astrologically favoured, or when the Sun graced either Libra or Taurus.

As to the design of the talisman, this can be left to the adept, inspired by what he finds within esoteric tradition. He may, if he likes, copy one of the talismans illustrated in this and other magical textbooks. If he is following the 'Western' system, he may begin by forming the Kabbalistic Cross, and then with hands folded recite an adaptation of the so-called 'Blessing of Kamea':⁴

'Blessed art Thou, O lord, who hast sanctified Thy great Name and has revealed it to Thy pious ones to show its power and might in the language, in the working of it, and in the utterance of the mouth: Yod-He-Vau-He'

Next he turns his attention to his talisman on which he inscribes or engraves the three Hebrew characters **בשם** or, if space is precious, the abbreviation **ב**. This means "in the name of" and is followed by the Tetragrammaton (**יהוה**) or by one of the divine synonyms.⁵ Although this name may be written in Hebrew, Western occultists usually write its Roman equivalent. There then follows a mnemonic which represents the four archangels (Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel) and a fifth, Nuriel.⁶ This again may be written in Roman letters (Argaman) or Hebrew (**ארגמן**). After this comes the talismanic intention which should if possible be reduced to one word; in the case of our example it would be 'Love'. If this cannot be done, the intention will have to be written out on a scrap of paper and reduced to its numerical root using the Hebrew numerological system. According to this, the letters of the alphabet are endowed with the following numerical values:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A	B	C	D	E	U	O	F
I	K	G	M	H	V	Z	P
Q	R	L	T	N	W		
J		S			X		
Y							

Let us assume in order to show how this works that the adept hopes to win the affection of someone called Mary Smith, so that at its simplest the intention he writes down will be 'Love: Mary Smith'. Converted into numbers, the message becomes 3765: 4121 34145. These numbers have now to be added together, and if the total has two digits or more these must again be added until a single digit, the 'numerical root', is finally obtained. In our example the sum of all the numbers comes to 46 which in turn adds up first to 10 (4+6) and then to 1 (1+0). It would thus be the number 1 that appeared on the talisman. Up to this point therefore our imaginary talisman looks something like [Figure 6](#).



Figure 6

So much for the obverse of the talisman, which may be regarded as the magician's contribution because it serves to give direction to the astral force.⁷ The other side the talisman will bear the symbols of that force and these by the law of micro/macrocosmic sympathy will shortly conduct the force itself down to the physical plane. Planetary symbols are perhaps the most commonly used, but they are not always explicit enough to capture the aspect or force most likely to satisfy the particular talismanic intention. That is why a special symbolism has been carefully elaborated over the centuries. Not only is this hermetically correct, but time and usage have

conferred upon it an astral potency of its own. The talismans illustrated below are based on this symbolism and may therefore be used with confidence.⁸

We have already seen how the effectiveness of ritual magic depends on the sacramental quality of the rite performed, culminating as it does in a virtual consecration of the celebrant. In the same way a talisman must receive an infusion of supernatural life if it is to bridge the gap between the astral and physical worlds. This will happen when it becomes the object of one's ritual intention and is solemnly consecrated as the rite attains its climax. If he prefers, however, the hard-pressed magician can skip the ritual preliminaries and simply *will* the power into the talisman, helped—if willpower is scarce—by concentration, mantric recitation or anything else he can think of. Given the adept's dedication, the correct time and the appropriate symbolism, nothing in heaven or earth can stop the appropriate force from linking up with the talisman. It will then have been 'charged'.

Some occultists, especially those who, following Paracelsus (see [Appendix 3](#)), like to explain magic in psychological terms, maintaining that if anything at all is charged, it is the mind of the magician. The talisman, they contend, is unaffected except that it endures as a visible reminder of what its creation was meant to bring about. As such it encourages its owner to create situations conducive to the attainment of his ambitions. This, however, leaves the talisman with as little intrinsic virtue as my examination socks. And if such in the case there seems hardly any point in going to the trouble of making one. Experience suggests, however, that this theory is ill-founded. The truth, affirmed by experience, is that talismans work even when their owner is sceptical, while amulets preserve the wearer from dangers unknown to him. Similarly, curses have been shown to work on unsuspecting victims.

But if the psychological explanation seems the more convincing, then by all means accept it. You will certainly need recourse to some kind of explanation, given that talismanic magic really works. This you will discover for yourself when you try your hand at imitating some of the following designs.

KABBALISTIC CHARMS

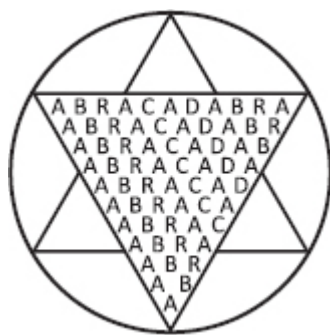


Figure 7

This is probably the best-known of all charms, first recorded in the 3rd Century, though its precise origin is disputed by scholars. Some suggest it is an Aramaic formula, while others maintain that it comprises the initials of the Hebrew term *Ab* (Father), *Ben* (Son) and *Ruach ACadsch* (Holy Spirit) or else derives from the Hebrew-Aramaic injunction *abreq ad habra*. More persuasive is the claim that it was an invention of the Basilidians, one of several Gnostic sects in 3rd Century Alexandria, being a reference to Abraxas, known as ‘The Great Archon’ and said by C. G. Jung (*Seven Sermons to the Dead*) to contain all opposites within Himself. The word was traditionally written on parchment and hung around the neck, often in a small pouch of soft leather, by a linen thread.

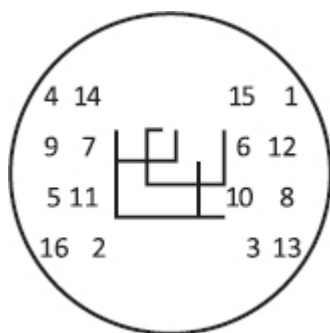


Figure 8

Any talisman engraved on silver when the Moon is well aspected is said to ensure general good fortune for its owner. A suitable inscription in such

a case would be the numerical one given above associated with Jupiter. This association means, of course, that the talisman would be particularly effective when engraved on tin. The symbol at the centre of this particular version is that of Bethor, the Olympian spirit associated with Jupiter. He is, by all accounts, the guarantor of a long and happy life.

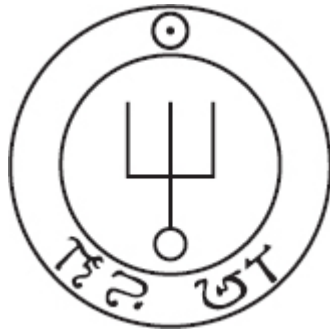


Figure 9

Made of gold and bearing the astrological symbols of both the Sun and its Olympic patron (Och), this is an excellent talisman for attracting wealth and friendship. When inscribed on paper and kept in a gold locket worn around the neck, it has the reputation of being lucky for gamblers and those in search of hidden treasure.



Figure 10

This talisman is traditionally associated with Sandalphon—the name, of Greek origin, means ‘Fellow Brother’—who, according to Midrashic tradition, was the guardian angel of our planet.⁹ In Babylonian, as well as Sumerian, mythology the same entity is described as a servant of the Archons, beings entrusted by God, notably the sky god Anu, with the

formation and subsequent evolution of the universe. That such entities exist is not implausible but it would be naive to over-personalize them.

Unfortunately, as was mentioned earlier, Midrashic tradition did just that by claiming that upon ascending to heaven, Elijah was transformed into Sandalphon and appointed custodian of the Earth.¹⁰ Most readers will find it hard enough to take the fiery chariot seriously, let alone the angelic metamorphosis. The symbolism of this talisman may be interpreted as the stewardship (☞) of Earth (⊕) being entrusted to Sandalphon who is represented by fire (Δ). On the other hand, the same symbols can also be read as Elijah's departure from Earth (⊕) in a fiery chariot (Δ) and his subsequent promotion in Heaven (☞). Whatever its true meaning this interesting talisman is held to be of a great value to all the Earth's children, especially those engaged in occult or philosophical study.



Figure 11

This healing amulet associates the divine monogrammaton with the solar imagery of Raphael, archangel of healing. It is effective in both preventing and curing all manner of illnesses. It may be struck on gold or inscribed on parchment.



Figure 12

In the second healing talisman the concentric circles represent the Inner Earth, or primary manifestation of the four elements. These elements are here regarded as the physical components of man and their common well-being is entrusted to the Archangels Uriel and Raphael, both of them agencies of the one God. Sometimes the centre of the circle contains the astrological symbol of the Moon. This is because of an esoteric tradition linking Uriel with the ‘old’ Moon which—according to the same tradition—preceded our present Moon in pre-Atlantean days. Its displacement in the heavens is said to be the cause of the seismic disturbances which finally resulted in the destruction of Atlantis. Rudolf Steiner (*see* Appendix 3) likewise referred frequently to the ‘Old’ Moon but it is unclear if he had in mind a celestial body or a pre-Atlantean phase of human evolution.

The talisman may be engraved on gold or silver or inscribed on parchment.



Figure 13

This talismanic inscription is from the ‘Magic of Light’, as set out in *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin The Mage* (*see* [Appendix 3](#)). In his translation of that document—or more precisely of a slightly corrupted version held in the Bibliothèque de l’Arsénal in Paris—S. L. MacGregor Mathers (*see* [Appendix 3](#)) sought to interpret the magical squares contained in it. The words that comprise them can, as in this example, often be read in several directions, a device believed perhaps to increase their potency. In this example the text should be written on parchment. Not only is it conducive to astral projection, as explained previously (Page 221, footnote 13) but also assures the sleeper of prophetic dreams.

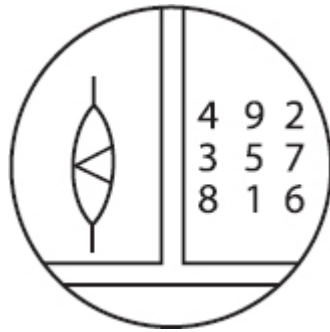


Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16

The use of these richly symbolic talismans has in the past largely been confined to practising magicians who have found them of tremendous value not only in their work but in their private lives as well. All three are equally powerful, but the first is particularly effective when one is dealing with the astral world. The figures represented express the divine name numerically and opposite them is a symbolised ‘third eye’. The second talisman brings enlightenment to questing minds (the initial A on the

Chalice of Wisdom, a symbol of Binah, suggests Pallas Athene), while the third, known as the ‘Crown of the Magi’, guarantees the adept's mastery of all the forces he encounters. Here, the symbols surrounding the hexagram represent the *Chayoth ha Kaddesh* or Holy Creatures of Ezekiel's vision (see *Ezekiel*: 1 and 10), four cherubim with the faces of, respectively, a man, lion, bull and eagle (cf. *Rev.* iv 7). Each of these variously represents one of the four elements, the four letters of the Tetragrammaton and the four sublime injunctions of the Sphinx (‘To know, to will, to dare, to keep silent’). In Christian symbolism the four Evangelists are also represented by the same creatures. The numbers are likewise significant, both individually and in combination: transliterated they obliquely reveal the Divine Name but of course in truth go beyond any single religious tradition. Twenty-one, the central number, for instance, was attributed to Tifareth on the Tree of Life, was held sacred by the Chaldeans and matches the number of trumps, the Fool apart, in a Tarot deck.

All these talismans may be struck on metal or drawn on parchment. Because of their connection with Saturn, [figures 14](#) and [15](#) are best engraved on lead.

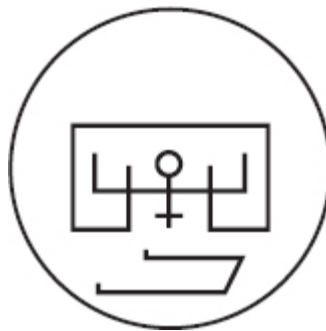


Figure 17

This love talisman should be made of copper, the metal of Venus, and bear the glyph of both that planet and its guardian spirit, Hagith. Alternatively, it may be drawn on parchment in green ink, when it should be kept in a locket of silver—or if you can obtain it copper. (Rumour, sadly fanciful, has it that over time the copper will slowly turn into gold.)

EGYPTIAN CHARMS

There is no shortage of Egyptian charms. Those illustrated here are some of the several amuletic inscriptions known to esoteric students for centuries, and more recently to a wider public thanks to the work of Egyptologists. They may be consecrated at the climax of an Egyptian ritual and bear the original hieroglyphics or their equivalents in Roman lettering. For that reason examples of both are given below.



Figure 20

This is an all-purpose protective amulet reportedly popular once among the inhabitants of Abydos. Sometimes known as the Seal of Shabako, it is not clear what connection it has with the Shabako Stone (c.700 BC), now in the British Museum. On it is inscribed an account of how the physical world was created by Ptah or universal reason. The inscription, which merely declares that the wearer has obtained sovereignty over all things, may be struck on metal or drawn on parchment. An alternative version found at Junu (Heliopolis) incorporates some solar imagery which, if adopted, should preferably be engraved on gold.

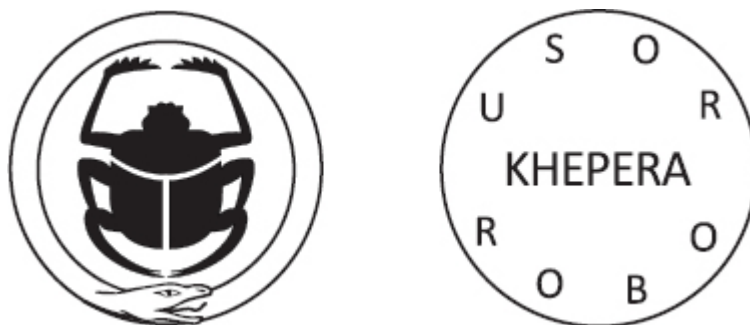


Figure 21

By far the most common Egyptian amulets are those soliciting the favour of the god-form Khopri, traditionally depicted as a beetle, hence the name 'scarab', derived from the Greek and bestowed on them during the Renaissance. This insect, believed to be self-generating, came to symbolize the emergence of life from inert matter, a notion worthy of reflection, even if in truth there is nothing extraordinary about the beetle's nativity.

In the present example, the beetle is depicted in the centre of a circle formed by a snake devouring its tail, a symbol of the perpetual self-renewal going on in nature. In modern occultism, as formerly in Egypt, the talisman has become associated with post-mortem survival. Some authorities are confident that the wearing of a scarab will ease the transition of consciousness into the astral body at the moment of death. The Egyptians favoured a different symbol for this, however, when creating amulets to protect the discarnate self. The example given below shows the serpent (*uraeus*) defending the soul from every evil by spitting out venom.



Figure 22



Figure 23

Originally intended to obtain or conserve health, this talisman is suitable whenever the intention is to ensure the physical or spiritual protection of the wearer. It should be struck in gold or silver, or if inscribed on parchment, kept in a locket of either metal.

Other Egyptian talismans dedicated to the preservation of health (*wedja/seneb/anch*) are dedicated to Imhotep, a man so knowledgeable that like the Pharaohs themselves he was accorded divine status after his death, becoming the patron of medicine. These tend to be of simpler design and consist of only one symbol which may be the Ankh (†) or the hieroglyph *Dad* (𓆎), which means endurance. The Ankh or Ansate Cross (from the Latin *crux ansata*, meaning ‘cross with handle’) became the universal symbol for life. Some Egyptologists believe it represents a dam holding back the waters of the Nile, but others discern a sexual symbolism.

CURSES

Sadly, magicians are probably better known for their curses than for their blessings, although less cursing goes on than popular fiction supposes. One way of harming one's foes is to send an artificial elemental after them, this being a synthetic form created by the imagination, animated by energies generated through concentration or ritual. By allowing his imagination to run riot, the nasty-minded adept can fashion some hideous creature which is then dispatched like a hound of hell to do its master's bidding. Occult fiction is full of stories that tell of the havoc wrought by such elementals and it was a favourite theme of Algernon Blackwood, who as a former associate of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and a student of magic, knew what damage could be caused by psychic attacks of this nature.

It is said that in the 'twenties a magical lodge in Hampstead created an artificial elemental which they hoped would disrupt a rival fraternity newly established in the neighborhood. But someone tipped off the intended victims who promptly held a meeting at which the aggressor was sent back to whence it came. Meanwhile the original Hampstead group, confident of their success, were sipping Lapsang Souchong in their sanctuary when in burst the turncoat elemental. Pandemonium ensued. Teacups were hurled in the air by invisible hands, sandwiches flung across the room and an ivory Buddha sent crashing through a gilt-framed portrait of Mme Blavatsky.

From that day forth no member of the group could escape the attentions of the elemental that each had played his part in creating. Described as looking like a giant sea anemone equipped with spindly legs, it went on to haunt members at their places of work, their homes and even in their beds. (It once tried to envelop a lady adept in a gelatinous embrace.) This may sound far-fetched, and indeed, the whole thing may have been a collective delusion, but I do know that only after due and lengthy ceremony was the creature finally got rid of. Fortunately its visitation did some good as it deterred that particular group from dabbling in such business again.^{[12](#)}

In material terms, so far as talismanic magic is concerned, the curse is an object designed to attract malefic forces to whomever the magician has in mind during its manufacture. Its function is similar therefore to that of a

talisman, except that the latter is meant to foster benefic conditions. Not that the job necessarily ends here, for several authorities insist that a curse must be ‘willingly’ (i.e. unwittingly) accepted by its intended victim, requiring the perpetrator to spend hours planning how to pass it on without arousing suspicion.

As I mentioned earlier, it is something you would do well to leave alone.

That said, there is always the risk, I suppose, that sometime or other you may find one of these nasties in the post or lying on your doormat. The thing to do then is to neutralize it as quickly as possible. Place the curse in the centre of the following diagram which should be drawn on a large sheet of paper. This will give you some temporary protection while you figure out what to do next. It may be some comfort to observe that the symbols in this diagram look effective enough to hold back a whole phalanx of demonic agents! By now you will recognize in it various holy letters, the Tau and other symbols, including two ‘marvelous candles’, copied no doubt from the *Petit Albert*, a popular 18th Century grimoire.

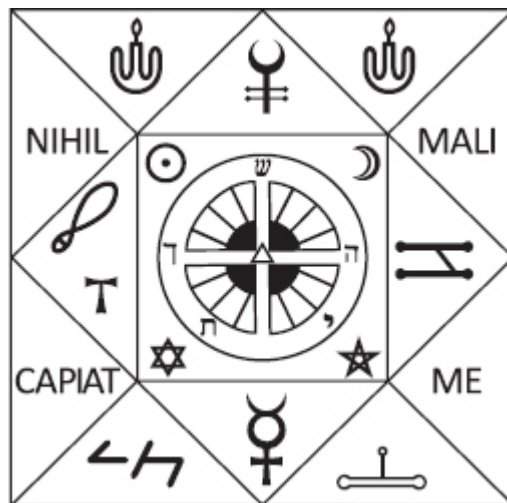


Figure 24

What you do next will depend on the nature of the curse, so you must endeavour to identify which sefirotic force it represents. For example, if the curse were engraved on a piece of iron you would find working through the Table of Correspondences that iron is the metal of Mars and that Mars is the planetary associate of the fifth sefira. The chances are

therefore that the klippothic force threatening to bear down on you is related to that of Geburah. So far so good. Now all you need to do is perform a rite of Mars during which the force is evoked in only its positive aspect and not, as would be usual, in its balanced duality. The reason for this is that the negative aspect represented by the curse will immediately conjoin with the positive aspect and form a balanced unit harmful to no one. All that remains to be done is to wrap the curse in the paper on which it rests and either burn both, effecting a ‘chemical’ change, or if more convenient, throw it into the sea or any pool or river. (The ultra-cautious may first wish to consecrate the water by adding a pinch of salt and uttering the appropriate words.)



Figure 25

We shall conclude this chapter with a talisman specially designed to allay the effects of other people's cursing, its symbolism by now apparent to the reader. This amulet will at least afford you some protection from the harm others wish upon you. Sadly, none of us is universally liked.

1 Part of his work, I was told—but found hard to believe—was the creation of a homunculus. These little creatures appear to have been fairly common in the 15th and 16th centuries, being a source of consternation to theologians unsure whether or not they possessed an immortal soul. Jewish Kabbalists, hoping to find the secret of creation, also experimented in a similar way. Their approach was to mould a human-sized figure from clay and place on it (or inside its mouth and nostrils) bits of paper bearing holy names. The assembled company would then stand around the figure intoning passages from the book of Genesis, interspersed with names of power. After one of them had breathed into the figure's nostrils, it would shudder and open its eyes. In 16th Century Poland a golem reportedly kept house for its creator, Rabbi Eliyahu of Chelm, though better known is the sorrowful golem, made out of mud from the Moldau river by Rabbi Loew ben Belazel, of Prague.. It lived in a room above the Altneu synagogue and was interrogated by King Rudolf II whose interest in the secret sciences is well attested. The last recorded golem thrived in 19th-century Russia.

magical rite). Amulet is of latin origin (*amuletum*) but its etymology is uncertain.

[3](#) Where paper or parchment is used, it is often advisable to enclose it, if feasible, in a locket of the corresponding planetary metal. Gold and sometimes silver are acceptable alternatives.

[4](#) Derived from the blessing bestowed by Jacob on his two grandsons, Ephraim and Menashe, as recorded in *Genesis* 48, 5.

[5](#) These include: Yah יהוה; Elohim אֱלֹהִים; El אֵל; Shaddai שַׁדַּי; Adonai אֲדֹנָי; Tzabaoth צְבָאוֹת

[6](#) Nuriel (lit. Divine Fire) is a name we have not encountered before. He is not one of the top ranking angels but officer class all the same. Linked in the *Zohar* to Virgo, he is associated with the sefira Hesed on the Tree of Life and traditionally represented by an Eagle, as indeed is Uriel, whose home is the neighbouring sefira, Hokmah. Nuriel is said to ward off evil. For that reason his name appears frequently on amulets.

[7](#) Most magicians agree that to be effective, talismans demand a reciprocal effort from the user. It is said that the mediaeval physician, Arnold of Villanova (1235-1311), was so convinced of this that he recommended they be recharged daily by a renewal of the original intention. He also maintained that while talismans were godsend to those struggling on the path of life, they benefitted only those who were pure in heart and mind.

[8](#) The adept may construct a talisman for others besides himself, although ideally they should be present when the work is done. If this is impossible they must be told the exact time of the operation in advance so that they can meditate on the talismanic intention and associate themselves with the magician's efforts on their behalf. After consecration the talisman should be wrapped in soft leather or in silk of any colour save brown or black until such time as it can be worn by the future owner. An occult tradition insists that the adept should accept no payment for his services, although common sense, more reliable than occult tradition, suggests that this may be a case where if the labourer is worth his hire, he is also worth his keep.

[9](#) i.e. to the sphere of Earth (Malkuth). The reader will recall that Uriel is the Regent of the *element* of Earth. In Jewish lore Sandalphon's job in the heavenly court was to weave garlands for the Almighty, but he also had a more down-to-earth function since it was he who differentiated the sex of every embryo. He subsequently came to be regarded as the protector of unborn children.

[10](#) A similar fate awaited the Prophet Enoch, who after his death became the Angel Metatron, 'Prince of the Presence'. Jewish tradition has it that Metatron is the Master of Heavenly Song when he works closely with Michael, said to be leader of the celestial choir.

[11](#) For the record, here it is: *Dixitque Adam: Hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis, et caro de... carne mea... erunt duo in carne una.* (This is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh... And the two became one flesh.)

[12](#) Not so boisterous but still bothersome was the elemental described by the French explorer Alexandra David-Neel in her book *Magic and Mystery* in Tibet. The author describes how she created a *tulpa*, local equivalent of an artificial elemental, by the exercise of her will and her imagination, utilising a technique known as *kriya shakti* ('the power of thought'). Her creation was a fat and jolly monk, so real that he was not only visible to others but able to carry out simple tasks on the expedition's camp site in the Himalayas. Slowly, however, he took on a life of his own, becoming progressively less responsive to her authority. She had therefore to set about 'dismantling' him, a task more difficult than that of willing him into existence, before dispersing to the four winds the energy that had endowed him with a semblance of life. Such rebelliousness is not untypical: Dion Fortune recounts similar experiences in several of her books.



THE ART OF PROPHECY

Many people suppose that being a magician turns you into something of a soothsayer as well. This can be embarrassing, especially when friends, aware of your occult interests start passing you their teacups in the hope you can discern their destiny in the distribution of the dregs. People, often perfect strangers, will come up to you at parties, and having announced that they are Aquarians, Virgoans or whatever, will calmly await your analysis of their character and matrimonial prospects.

My own experience inclines me to think that precognition, however implausible, does indeed happen. Some readers may know this from personal experience, thanks possibly to precognitive dreams or hunches that turn out to be correct. It would of course be foolish to attribute all such experiences to precognition, especially when coincidence and guesswork, the latter better informed than we realise, play such an important part in our lives. Indeed, the theoretical odds are stacked against precognition, not least because the implications defy common sense, conflicting with our experience of time's relentless flow from past to future, as well as being a challenge both to the law of cause and effect and to our cherished notions of free will. Moreover our scientific betters assure us that were future events to 'intrude' upon the past—in this case our present—then the second law of thermodynamics would be breached. (I'm not sure how, so don't ask.) Yet even scientists concede, some with more distaste than others, that certain experiments in quantum physics point to what they call a 'retrocausal' effect, meaning that the effect anticipates, even determines, its cause.¹ It would be foolish therefore to rule out precognition *per se*.

A much-quoted example of it involves the investigator Dr. S. G. Soal and a 'direct voice' medium, Mrs. Blanche Cooper.² In January 1922 Soal received a message from someone purporting to be an old school friend named Gordon Davis. The same 'spirit' had already offered Soal some evidential proof of its identity at an earlier séance. Now he began to speak of a terraced house with a 'funny dark tunnel' beside it, situated in what the voice described as 'half a street' with the letter E predominant and five or six steps 'and a half' leading up to the front door. Opposite the house stood 'something' which none of its neighbours shared, 'not a veranda but

something like one'. The spirit voice then described the interior of the house, referring to an upstairs room with a very large mirror and several pictures depicting 'glorious mountains' and seascapes. Reference was also made to some very large vases and 'funny saucers'. Turning its attention to a downstairs room it described 'two funny brass candlesticks' on a shelf and "a black dickie-bird on the piano". Mention was made too of a wife and small son.

At the time of the séance Dr. Soal believed that Gordon Davis had been killed in action during the First World War. However, three years later, in February 1925, he learned with some astonishment that his friend was still alive and living in Southend, his address being 54 Eastern Esplanade. When Soal went there on April 18th he found it to be a terrace house on the sea-front ('half a street') with a promenade shelter directly opposite ('something...not a veranda'). Six steps led up to the front door, the topmost step being little more than a thin slab ('five or six steps and a half'). Soal noticed too that between each pair of front doors in the terrace was a covered passage ('a funny dark tunnel') leading to the back. Inside the house more surprises lay in store for Soal. In an upstairs drawing-room he found a very large mirror suspended over the fireplace and seven pictures on the wall, six of them scenic views in which sea and mountains figured prominently. There were also five very large vases in the room, together with two saucer-shaped plaques ('funny saucers'). Downstairs, as promised, were two brass candlesticks, the only ones in the house, and on the piano a porcelain kingfisher perched on a black pedestal ('a black dickie-bird on the piano'). To all appearances Mrs Cooper had provided what turned out to be an impressively accurate description of the house and its interior at the séance three years earlier. But the real cause for amazement comes when we read that although the séance with Mrs Cooper took place in January 1922, Gordon Davis, his wife and small son did not move into the house *until almost twelve months after that date*.

There can be no disputing the facts. Dr Soal, experienced investigator that he was, had made careful notes of his séance with Mrs Cooper, and these had been signed, dated and witnessed. The subsequent discovery of Gordon Davis, his move to 54 Eastern Esplanade, the details of his home there—all these were fully corroborated. We cannot avoid the conclusion that the voice, whoever it belonged to, which spoke through Mrs Cooper in 1922, had described in minute details things that had not yet taken place.

As I said earlier, the difficulty about accepting such cases as evidence of precognition is that they upset our orderly notions about time, and deep down we don't like this one bit. So accustomed are we to conceiving of the passage of time in three-dimensional terms that our mind rebels against the possibility of a future which already exists, fearing perhaps that our precious free will may then turn out to be an illusion.

Small wonder that the idea of precognition and a pre-existent future is something most of us, left to ourselves, are reluctant to dwell on. Others, however, are intrigued by the possibility, often as a result of an anomalous experience that calls into question their assumptions about the nature of time. Before physicists began to take an interest, people like Henri Bergson,³ P. D. Ouspensky and J. W. Dunne were already exploring its implications, while Dunne's book *An Experiment with Time* (1929), as well as its successor, *The Serial Universe* (1934) enjoyed considerable success. Someone influenced by Dunne was the novelist and playwright J. B. Priestley who went on to publish *Man and Time*, his own wide-ranging survey of the topic.

Priestley made the suggestion that precognitive dreams may be more frequent than is generally imagined, but our daytime consciousness is so fearful of their implications that they get shoved into oblivion within seconds of our waking up. He goes on to suggest, following Dunne, that we try sleeping with a pad and pencil under our pillow, so that immediately on waking we can record whatever dream memories we retain. These can be compared with subsequent events to see if there is any correlation between them.

For the purposes of this chapter we shall avoid being drawn into the free-will versus determinism controversy and confine ourselves instead to a theoretical justification for precognition. Plausibility rather than philosophical proof is our aim. Those readers who want really to get to grips with the topic are advised to read some of the books which deal with it in depth.

Most of us regard time as the backcloth to a sequence of events taking place during our progress from birth to death, or as we shall call it, A to B. If we pause to think about our journey at any point, let us call it X, between A and B, we become aware of three things: (i) a past made up of A to X, (ii) a present X, and (iii) a future consisting of X to B. Of these three only X has any actuality, being the infinitesimal moment which

forms our 'now'. Beyond it lies a future as yet devoid of reality, and behind it a past that is in some ways only subjectively real, being filled with remembered experiences. As we continue our journey towards B, the widening distance between A and X accumulates memories of what happened at various points along the way, each point an erstwhile present that's now past. The future (X to B), on the other hand, is filled with unknown potential, one that cannot be realized until acted upon by the steadily advancing (X). In other words, we face an amorphous future whose eventual shape depends on a series of forthcoming 'presents'. For that reason the future, being formless, should not be foreseeable.

And there the case would rest, were it not for evidence suggesting the future can on occasion be foreseen. Faced with this evidence we can do one of two things: attribute all recorded cases of precognition to fraud, coincidence and unconscious inference, or we can reconsider our views about time. The first course is the easier, but to adopt it would be to ignore cases like that of Gordon Davis, not all of which may be accounted for by deception or fraud. More honest would be to square up to the fact that the future has at times been predicted and so must in some way or another already exist. (Were that not the case, it would not be there to predict.) And if, as we have posited, the future already exists, then our journey from A to B must lead not, as we thought, towards an amorphous future but to a destination where we are expected. This is what the astronomer and physicist Arthur Eddington had in mind when he declared that events do not happen, but we happen upon events.

Things may become a little clearer if we exchange the As, Bs and Xs of our earlier example for the more homely picture of a passenger on a train. The time is 10 a.m., and as he looks out of the window our passenger observes some cows grazing in a field. Soon they are lost to view and in their place are some lambs frolicking on a grassy slope. The time is 10.02 a.m. The cows he saw at 10 a.m. belong to the traveler's past, while the gamboling lambs are a part of his present (10.02 a.m.). Yet those same lambs were already frisking merrily at 10 a.m. and only the physical limitations of the railway carriage prevented our traveller from seeing them. Indeed, had he put his head to of the window at 10 a.m. he might well have seen them sooner.⁴

Our notion of time, like that of our traveller, is determined by our location in what, our senses remind us, is a three-dimensional reality.

Because of this, our sense of time is determined by our sense of space. Just as we are normally aware of only three dimensions—height, length and breadth⁵—so we experience time in similar terms.

In the example of our train traveller we became aware of the limitations of such a perspective because we ourselves were not confined inside the carriage. Instead, from our vantage-point outside it we could observe that the cows and lambs he saw were not, as they appeared to him, successive phenomena, but coexisted in a shared present. Had our traveler stuck his head out of the window he too would have realised it, for he would have escaped from the constraints of his situation.⁶

This is exactly what our subconscious is able to do when, as in dreams, it is no longer subject to conscious control. At such a time it dwells in what we have elsewhere called ‘absolute time’, an all-embracing present akin to the state of timelessness mystics claim to have experienced. Here it is able to experience past, present and future not as segments of time relative to the body's occupation of space, but as an eternal ‘now’.

All of which mean precognition may well be possible when the mind is liberated, as for example in dreams, from its everyday constraints. Normally such an event is involuntary but the aim of divination is to encourage a willed transition to that state of ‘aspatial’ consciousness where absolute time prevails. Such a dislocation of consciousness is the *modus operandi* of crystal gazing, where the scryer endeavours to suspend all routine mental activity by fixing his attention, to the exclusion of all else, on the crystal ball. It is then empowered to function in absolute time and any images observed are duly ‘seen’ within the crystal. It is claimed, for reasons I no longer remember, that the best results are achieved when the crystal is placed on a black sheet of paper on which the following Egyptian figure has been drawn in white chalk.⁷

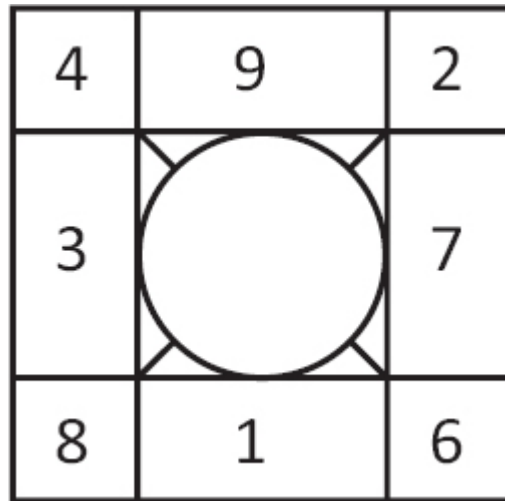


Figure 26

The study of tea-leaves, Tarot cards and, possibly, the entrails of dead animals (if you've the stomach for it) are likewise aids to divination, enabling the diviner, consciously or not, to move into the multi-dimensional realm of absolute time. His magical training and knowledge of astral conditions will equip him for the job intellectually, while concentration and meditation will carry him further.

Ritual magic can do the same. As the Table of Intentions has shown, the appropriate rite is a Mercurial one and Hod will be the sefira to which the adept directs his attention. Some magicians prefer, before they begin, to frame a specific question about whatever aspect of the future concerns them. The answer will then be apprehended either at the climax to the rite or later in the form of a dream. At no time, however, should there be any deliberate straining for an answer, since given half a chance the uninformed mind will be all too eager to supply its own. It is far better to wait passively for the answer to rise, often in allegorical terms, from the subconscious.

Sometimes that answer comes not in a convenient flash of inspiration but later in a dream. The danger here is that it may become distorted in the process, and that waking consciousness, being rationally biased, will be reluctant to preserve intact a dream experience where reality and fantasy intermingle. The usual pad and pencil at the bedside are the only precaution you can take, but frequently the dream will have fled from memory even before you have a chance to reach for it. Fortunately, the

conscious mind becomes more amenable once it has learned to accept the theoretical validity of precognition. Dreams are then more easily remembered and the ability to look into the future is slowly acquired. Once again, patience and understanding are called for.

What we have been discussing so far may be described as intuitive precognition, since the mind becomes aware of information subliminally received and with little conscious effort. There exist, however, other methods of divination in which the conscious mind plays a more active role, working on the assumption that observable things are themselves pointers to events in the future. This is perhaps as it should be, for the whole of nature is a dynamic process dedicated to the realization of an evolutionary goal, one both natural and supernatural in scope. Thus by observing what *is*, we are able to infer what *will be*. This is exactly what scientists do when they tell us a stump-tailed macaque monkey will lose its stump in a thousand years, or that our small toes are likewise doomed to extinction. These and other pieces of scientific induction like every statistical projection are no more than an exercise in precognition based on existing data.

The magical adept does much the same when he endeavours to deduce the future from his observation of natural phenomena, be they the stars in the sky or the lines on someone's palm. Sceptics will quickly protest that it is one thing to look at a monkey's backside and prophesy the eventual disappearance of its tail, but quite another to deduce the future from the flight of birds or position of the planets within our solar system. The difference between them is that the first method begins with the particular and sticks to it, while the second proceeds from a particular to the general. On their own terms, however, both are equally valid. The first confines itself to the external aspect of nature, while the second searches for an inner or, if you like, hidden meaning—which, after all, is the *raison d'être* of occultism.

The inner meaning of things arises from their common existence on the plane of matter. We must leave the physicists to explain, label and quantify the essential properties of the particles and waves that compose it, although it is becoming increasingly clear that these properties bear out the hermetic thesis. This, you will recall, supposes the interdependence of all things within a universal scheme, so that the part reflects the whole and

vice versa. It is what Blake so picturesquely described in some famous lines in ‘Auguries of Innocence’:

*To see a World in a grain of sand,
And a Heaven in a Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.*

It is also on a practical, if at times poetic, level contained within the theory of correspondences. There we find the exoteric aspect of that fundamental unity implicit in all things, and of which all things are themselves part.

The most popular system of divination from observable phenomena is probably astrology. Its supporters maintain that events here on Earth run parallel to events in the sky, because both depend ultimately on the same vital source.⁸ Palmistry, the arrangement of cards, the drawing of lots and myriad other divinatory practices rest on this same basis, which supposes that as the universe is one great design, any event occurring in one part will have important repercussions elsewhere. For this reason the study of particular events, however insignificant, is held to inform the enlightened observer what future events are thereby presaged.⁹

The pity is that methods of divination, the so-called ‘occult sciences’, have for so long been over-simplified and commercially exploited that by now they are largely discredited. Some of them, it is true, seem highly suspect at the best of times—including such polysyllabic wonders as alectryomancy, where a cock pecks pieces of grain spread over letters of the alphabet; aleuromancy, where messages are enclosed in small balls of dough; alomancy, which is a form of divination with salt; anthropomancy, the scrutiny of the entrails of sacrificial victims; and so on right through the alphabet via ceromancy, lampadomancy, molybdomancy, pyromancy until we reach xeromancy or divination from the appearance of foreign visitors, and finally zoomancy which relies on the observation of animal behaviour.

If he wishes, the adept can at once start observing things around him in order to detect their relationship to future events. For those who distrust their own observation there is a vast literature available on astrology, palmistry, the Tarot¹⁰ and other methods of fortune-telling. These books

will teach you to predict the future, often in considerable detail, from the evidence present to you.

To sum up, there are two methods of looking into the future. The first is intuitive and proceeds from the subconscious to the conscious mind, while the second depends on the activity of the conscious mind and is a process of induction from given data. In most cases of precognition, however, there is a little of each. Astrologers describe how they often get hunches while staring at someone's natal chart so that they are able to supply details which cannot be inferred from the information they have before them. The same thing happens to palmists as they peer at the lines criss-crossing someone's hand. Such 'clairvoyance' supplements the inductive process and arises from the release of the diviner's subconscious into absolute time. There it sees realized what the conscious mind in its study of cards, palms or planets sees only in unfulfilled potential.

The adept with prophetic ambitions must decide by which of the many methods available he aims to realize them. He should strive to understand both what he is doing and why he does it, so that all levels of the mind collaborate in the search for what nature graciously reveals to those that take the time to look. Who knows, he may end up being the toast of every party he goes to.

¹ For an interesting but by now somewhat dated account of experiments in the field, see D. J. West, *Psychical Research Today* (Duckworth, London, 1954 and Penguin Books, Harmondsworth 1962). More difficult for the non-scientist but worth the effort are the recent contributions of D. J. Benn, "Feeling the Future: experimental evidence for anomalous retroactive influences on condition and effect" (*Journal of Personal and Social Psychology*, 2011. pp. 407-425) and "Consciousness Induces Restoration of Time Symmetry: a psychophysical theoretical perspective", *Proceedings*, 51st Annual Meeting, Parapsychological Association, 2008, pp. 33-49.

² See S. G. Soal, 'A report on Some Communications Received through Mrs Blanche Cooper', *Proceedings*, Society for Psychical Research, vol. xxxv (1926), pp. 471-594. The experiment was conducted in 1922 at the London Spiritualist Alliance (later the College of Psychic Science and now the College of Psychic Studies). It is mentioned by several writers on psychical research, among them West (*op. cit.*). Soal's reputation is not without blemish: in 1978 evidence of statistical bias was uncovered in respect of work on telepathy he had undertaken some thirty years earlier. That said, the only suggestion of malfeasance known to me in respect of the present case is made by Melvin Harrison in his *Investigating the Unexplained* (new ed., Prometheus Books, Amherst, 2003). Though interesting, it falls short of real proof. Significantly, Gordon Davis, the man at the centre of the episode, tirelessly affirmed its veracity right up to his death in the nineteen-sixties. Further details may be found in *The Society for Psychical Research, 1882-1982: a History* (Renée Haynes, Macdonald & Co., London, 1982.)

³ The distinguished philosopher (and Nobel Prize winner) Henri Bergson (1859-1941) was the brother of Mina (Moïna) Mathers, wife of Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers, co-founder of the

Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (see [Appendix 3](#)).

[4](#) This example, though useful, is not completely satisfactory since the action of the lambs at 10 a.m. would not have been the same as that observed at 10.02 a.m.

[5](#) Strictly speaking, the three dimensions are a combination of any three of the following: length, width, height, depth, and breadth. The only condition is that all three cannot lie in the same plane.

[6](#) Here we must abandon our example of the man in the train or else we shall be led into a process of infinite regression. This is because although we as observers are in absolute time compared with him, that time is still relative so far as we ourselves are concerned. This is comparable to the example which, I think, Priestley gives, of a man who wished to paint a certain landscape. To make the picture complete he decided to paint himself into it. But no sooner had done so than he realized that to make the picture truly complete he would need to paint himself painting himself into the scene before him. And so on ad infinitum. I am still fond of an example that used to fascinate me as a child. On the label of a coffee essence named Camp was depicted a kilted army officer being served a cup of coffee by an Indian servant. On the tray which the servant held was an identical bottle, complete with label, so the regression of servants and coffee-drinking officers was unending. Fortunately, absolute time lies outside the three-dimensional world of matter so is exempted from the risk of infinite regression.

[7](#) For added authenticity the symbols used in Ancient Egypt to represent numbers may be drawn in place of the Arabic numerals shown:

4: II	9: III	2: II	3: III	7: IIII	8: IIII	1: I	6: III
II	III			III	IIII		III
	III						

[8](#) This is not the only explanation. In his defence of astrology Jung suggested that what a horoscope did was crystallize a particular moment of time and so reveal the microcosm's relationship with the macrocosm that contains it. He also proposed that the influence of inanimate objects, as yet unacknowledged, might furnish a causal basis for astrology. Those interested in learning more may care to read the essay he wrote in collaboration with the theoretical physicist Wolfgang Pauli, *On the Nature of the Psyche* (see C. G. Jung, *The Collected Works*, vol. 8, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1960).

[9](#) These lines by Francis Thompson (from *The Mistress of Vision*) are appropriate:

*When to the new eyes of thee
All things by immortal power,
Near or far,
Hiddenly
To each other link-ed are,
That thou canst not stir a flower
Without troubling of a star...*

Sir Isaac Newton likewise argued that each particle in the universe affected every other, an aspect of Newtonian physics that the modern “post-Newtonian” version has not only retained but vindicated.

[10](#) Tarot cards are probably primitive versions of contemporary playing-cards. Not that this has prevented enthusiasts from investing them with more fanciful origins. Some maintain that they were invented by the ancient Egyptians and brought to Europe by the gypsies, while others attribute their creation to a group of 13th-century Kabbalists living near Fez. Many versions of the cards exist including the Tarot of Marseilles and the Tarot of Etteilla (an anagram of its creator, the 18th Century occultist, Jean-Baptiste Alliette). Among modern versions, best known perhaps are the Rider-Waite deck, designed by A.E. Waite (see [Appendix 3](#)) and Pamela Colman Smith, the Tarot des Bohémiens, designed by Gabriel Goulinat on behalf of Papus (Gerard Encausse/see [Appendix 3](#))

and the Thoth Tarot, designed by Frieda Harris, in collaboration with Aleister Crowley. Each set consists of 78 cards. Of these, 56 belong to the Minor Arcana and are divided into four suits (cups, wands, pentacles and swords). The remainder form the Major Arcana or Tarot trumps, and on each is pictured an allegorical figure. Behind these figures, often in a mediaeval settings, are said to lie the most profound secrets of hermetic philosophy. For a reliable history see Paul Huson, *Mystical Origins of the Tarot: From Ancient Roots to Modern Usage*, Destiny Books, Rochester (Vermont), 2004.

A WORD ABOUT DEMONS

Once at a party where I had drunk more than was good for me, I started arguing the case for the supernatural with the author of a book on psychical research. A buxom lady who, it turned out, was a Christian Scientist, listened attentively to our discussion and when it was over drew me aside. 'A word in your ear', she whispered, 'about demons.' As the demon drink had by then reduced my resistance to nothing, I had little choice but to listen to her as she warned about evil spirits waiting to pounce on anyone who ventured within 10 feet of a ouija board. I'm afraid I took none of it very seriously. But at this point I intend having a word in your ear about the same subject. I cannot help wondering if my remarks will be treated as lightly as I treated those of Mrs. Eddy's disciple. I hope not. Like her, I believe they merit attention.

If this were an encyclopaedia of demonology (and there are such things¹) we would now be faced with the daunting chore of cataloguing all known demons—and there are thousands of them, of every shape, size and hue. The problem is compounded by the fact that one demon may have myriad different shapes and often just as many names to go by. Fortunately, this work may safely be left to the encyclopaedist although, unlike the magician, he is unlikely ever to find himself confronting the real thing. Let us then look at the subject of demons within the context of practical magic.

Up to now we have tended to treat all astral forces as impersonal which is quite in order since the power used in magic is indeed essentially impersonal. And yet everyone who reads occult literature or has any experience of magic will soon be brought up against entities which seem every bit as personal as himself. And if on occasion the beings that turn up during ritual work are not exactly personal, then they are certainly not formless. The novice magician must not be astonished therefore if he finds himself confronted by human shapes or by others whose likeness may or may not exist in the natural world.

In an earlier chapter, we discussed in some detail the objective reality of such forms. By now the reader who has already tried his hand at magic may even have discovered their reality for himself. If so, he will know that

the great forms encountered in the master rituals, be they elemental or angelic, are on the whole well disposed (or at worst indifferent) towards him. This is because the ceremonial preliminaries and the pattern of each rite are designed to ensure undesirable influences are kept firmly at bay. But a time will come when the magician's experiments may introduce him to the delinquents of the astral dark, those devils and demons so beloved of story-tellers the world over. These forms, too, are essentially forces but a number of them do seem to have acquired a formal identity of their own. To call them 'evil' would be an over-simplification, but in this case life becomes easier if for once we allow ourselves to be over-simple. We shall call them evil for the good reason that given the chance, they might do us immeasurable harm.

The shapes assumed by demons are far from horrendous, at least to begin with, when their owners may be striving to give a good impression: little children, gentle old folk, beautiful young people of either sex, these are some of their favourite disguises. Though themselves not human, they will display as much resourcefulness as the most cunning human being. They will flatter, charm, threaten and cajole with consummate skill in an attempt to gain the upper hand, and the unwary magician may all too easily succumb to their wiles. What do they hope to achieve by this? Well, being the forces of disorder and imbalance, they seek firstly to upset the ritual and so thwart the adept's intention. However, this is subordinate to their principal aim which is to prevail over anyone, in this case the magician, who threatens what they regard as their vocation, indeed their very *raison d'être*.² For them the perceived threat springs from the fact that ritual success depends on the constituent aspects, positive and negative, of a perfectly balanced force. Such collaboration is abhorrent to any unbalanced force, irrevocably separated, as it is, from its complementary aspect. On that account it will do all it can to wreak havoc.

Physical assault by demonic agents is comparatively rare, though by no means unknown, so there is scant risk of the careless adept being battered by some science-fiction type of monster. However, a physical battering might be preferable to the psychological assault to which he is more likely to fall victim. The science-fiction monster will still be there, but the adept alone will be aware of it; the pain will still be acute but his body bear no scars. In other words, his hell will be a secret one, a private madness that no one else can share or even start to comprehend.

From this arises the ever-present need for caution before scaling the heights of magic. Even in the foothills there lurk dire perils, which is why the rites so far described should not be undertaken lightly. When someone sets out deliberately to control the astral world, be that world inside or outside his mind, he faces dangers which only knowledge and experience can help to overcome. But even the cleverest and most knowledgeable magician understands that the demons of the pit are waiting for the one false step that will deliver him, or rather, his sanity to them.

These dangers should not be exaggerated, still less should they deter you from the practice of magic, unless you happen to be of a nervous disposition, in which case you should take up meditation instead. Magic is probably a lot safer than driving a car, although, as in motoring, care and attention are needed to remain safe. If, therefore, you come across a *grimoire* containing a demonic invocation which you are tempted to try, you may do so without too much risk, provided you take suitable precautions. Most of the invocations you will come across are nonsense anyway.

That said, some people are attracted by the prospect of seeing demons, some for the thrill of it and others for confirmation that the bogies of their childhood nightmares³ are real after all. Little good, however, can come from consorting with the shadier inhabitants of the astral world unless, of course, your ritual intention is a negative one. In that case these entities will, without too much persuasion, do their utmost to help you, their appetite for destruction and discord being insatiable.

One of the ways of contacting the demon kingdom is to use a revised form of the master rituals, generally the Kabbalistic version, since in the western world more is known about the demons of that tradition than any other. (Better the demons you know than those you don't.) For this experiment the adept, clad in black, draws his magic circle and Triangle of Art in the prescribed manner. Inside the circle he formulates the Kabbalistic Cross before proceeding to perform the usual banishing ritual. On this occasion, however, only the eastern, southern and western stations are 'sanctified'. That of the north is left as it is, unattended by its archangelic guardian.⁴ Turning now to this station, the adept places a candle there, whispering the name of the demon he hopes later to summon. The self-anointing and other preliminaries follow in the usual way, except that incense, with asafoetida added to the mix, is conveyed to the northern

station and allowed to burn there. Henceforth, whenever he approaches that station the adept will kneel and whisper to the Earth the demon's name.⁵

As soon as the customary transition from Malkuth to Yesod has taken place, the adept summons the fiend, calling its name 11 times. A period of waiting follows during which the magician focuses his attention on the triangle of art and recites certain words.⁶ Sometime later the demon will respond to the summons, if so disposed, although at first the adept will merely sense its presence as it stalks like some curious beast along the perimeter of the circle. Eventually, it will assume visible form within the triangle. Should it appear anywhere else it must be commanded to depart forthwith: only an experienced magician can cope with a refractory demon, and even then there can be problems.

Assuming the form has turned up in the right place, it will soon begin to act and talk in a friendly manner. Do not forget, however, that its winning ways conceal a sinister purpose—namely, to get you out of the circle and into its clutches. Nor should the circle be abandoned if it tries to intimidate or frighten you by suddenly producing a hellish host of friends and family. This is what happened to Benvenuto Cellini in sixteenth-century Rome after he had made the acquaintance of a Sicilian priest with occult leanings.

One night the two of them, accompanied by a couple of friends, repaired to the Coliseum where they planned to evoke demons. Here is Cellini's account from his autobiography, of what happened next:⁷

The priest, clad in the impressive manner of all conjurors, began to draw strange and wondrous circles on the ground. He had made us bring along a stock of rare perfumes and some incense which gave off a foul and noisome odor. When all was ready he opened up the main circle and taking each of us by the hand led us inside. He handed the pentacle to another necromancer, his partner, whom he commanded to burn incense at the due and proper times while the rest of us were bidden to look after the fire. Finally the incantation began.

The ceremony had been going on for over an hour and a half when suddenly the Coliseum became filled with legions of devils. I was busy with the perfumes, but the priest guessing that a sufficient

number of infernal spirits had assembled, turned to me and said 'Benvenuto, ask them something.' Whereupon I replied, 'Let them bring me into the company of my Sicilian mistress, Angelica.' That night, alas, we obtained no satisfactory answer from them, but I was at least glad to have indulged my curiosity.

The magician now told me that a second visit would be necessary and he promised that I should then be satisfied in whatever I might ask. He warned me, however, to bring with me a small boy who had never had knowledge of woman.⁸ And so I took along my young apprentice who was then about twelve years of age. With us also were Vincenzo Romoli, my companion on the previous occasion, and a certain Agnolino Gaddi, a close friend of ours. When we reached the appointed place the priest began the same preparations as before, but this time they were far more elaborate. He then placed us inside the circle which again was more artistically and solemnly drawn than last time. Having entrusted the care of the perfumes and fire to my friend Vincenzo, assisted by Gaddi, the magician handed me a pentacle, ordering me to turn it towards whatever direction he indicated. I instructed my apprentice to sit beneath the pentacle. Now began more wondrous incantations during which the magician summoned by name a vast multitude of demons, leaders of several legions, whom he interrogated in the name of that eternal and uncreated God who reigns forever, using the Hebrew language as well as Greek and Latin. Almost at once the empty theater became filled with demons a hundred times more numerous than at the previous conjuration. In the meantime Vincenzo, helped by Gaddi, was busily tending the fire and burning on it a large quantity of precious incense. Prompted by the magician I once more expressed my wish to be reunited with my Angelica, after which the sage turned to me and said, 'Listen, they have just disclosed that in the space of a month you shall be with her.'

He then asked me to be brave and stand beside him since the legions about us were a thousand more than had been summoned. Worse than that, they were of an exceedingly dangerous kind. Thus as soon as my question was answered we felt obliged to dismiss them as civilly and as gently as possible.⁹ By this time the young lad beneath the pentacle was in a state of extreme terror and swore that

there had gathered in the place a million fierce men all bent on our destruction. In addition there were four armed giants of tremendous size, each doing his best to force his way into our circle. The necromancer who by now was himself quivering with fear, tried again to dismiss politely the assembled hosts, while Vincenzo trembling like an aspen leaf took care of the incense. Although I felt as scared as any of them I strove hard to conceal my fright in the hope that my example would put fresh courage into the rest. The truth is, of course, that I had already given myself up for dead, especially when I beheld the abject terror of the magician.

The boy with us had put his head between his knees and kept moaning, 'I shall die in this position for we are most certainly doomed.' I told him to look up, assuring him that all he would see were smoke and shadows, but when he raised eyes he cried out, 'The whole place is on fire and the flames are about to fall on us.' Then, his face covered, he sobbed that our end was unavoidable. Again the magician bade me remain calm and burn the correct incenses. I therefore turned to Vincenzo Romoli and told him to do this forthwith. As I did so, I caught sign of Gaddi who was so frightened that he scarcely knew where he was and seemed as good as dead. Sensing the gravity of his condition I shouted, 'Gaddi, at times like this a man should make himself useful instead of yielding to fear, so move yourself and help me with the incense.'...

Fortunately, Cellini's steadfastness saved the situation. At last the demons departed, enabling the exhausted party to head home. For the historian of magic this has always been a favourite anecdote, but for magicians it is far more. For them the semblance of courage the narrator maintained, thanks to his self-control, has become one of the first lessons they must learn. Though sometimes quaking with fear, countless adepts have remembered Cellini's advice to Gaddi and made themselves useful rather than succumb, as weaker men would, to the pandemonium prevailing about them.

Perhaps the picture of Cellini and his friends surrounded by devils is a good one to leave with you at the end of this cautionary chapter. As promised, I have had a word in your ear about consorting with demons. The best word, of course, is don't.

[1](#) For example, see R. H. Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (Spring Books, London, 1959). For a comprehensive catalogue of angels, good and bad, see Gustav Davidson's *Dictionary of Angels* (The Free Press, London, 1967). More recent are *The Encyclopedia of Demons and Demonology* by Rosemary Ellen Guiley (Visionary Living, New York, 2009) and *Devils, Demons and Witchcraft* by Ernst and Johanna Lehner (Dover, Mineola, 1971). A trailblazer was J. A. S. Collin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal* (1818), especially the illustrated edition that appeared in 1863.

[2](#) As Lactantius says in his *Divine Institutes*: 'These spirits, defiled and abandoned, roam across the face of the earth, seeking comfort in their perdition by destroying man. Thus they fell everything with their tricks and stratagems, their deceits and their wiles.'

[3](#) The word in fact arrived from the Anglo-Saxon *maer*, meaning sprite or elf.

[4](#) Some demonophiles substitute the following names for those of the four archangels: Magon (east), Paimon (west), Egym (north), Amaimon (south). These and other barbarous names have been lifted from the *Second Book of Abramelin* (see [Appendix 3](#)), where their owners are described as sub-princes of the infernal realm. (Other *grimoires* promote them to full princes.) Most are found also in the *Lemegeton* (see [Appendix 3](#)/Solomon) and in similar texts, though here the rulers of the compass points are sometimes listed as Belial, Beleth, Asmodai and Gaap. Of those named in *Abramelin*, Magon (or Magot) is said to have the appearance of a dwarf and is the guardian of buried treasure. Significantly, the name Asmodeus, found in the *Book of Tobit*, is linked to the Hebrew verb 'to destroy'. In his *Magia naturalis et innaturalis* the celebrated Dr. Faustus changes the order slightly, replacing Magoa in the East with the eponymous Oriens. He reminds us, too, that the demonic equivalents of the elemental angels are Samael (fire), Azazel (air), Azael (water) and Mahazael (Earth).

[5](#) There is no shortage of demons to choose from—according to Talmudic tradition there are no less than 7,405,926 of them. The following is a very short alphabetical selection: Abac, Aldai, Aliseon, Asmodeus, Ayperos, Bathim, Casmiel, Chameron, Danochar, Densor, Destatur, Dumosson, Eparinesont, Esmony, Estiot, Glasyalabolas, Gomeh, Hayras, Lat, Lillith, Mandousin, Marbas, Naydrus, Ouyar, Premy, Pruslas, Pursan, Valefar.

[6](#) These might be no more than the mantric repetition of such ancient evocatory formulae as, 'Palas aron azinomas', 'Xilka, Xilka, Besa, Besa' or 'Bagahi laca Bachabe'. The Key of Solomon recommends the recitation of nine divine appellatives: Eheieh, Yod, Tetragrammaton, Elohim Gibor, Eloah Va-Daath, El Adonai Tzabaoth, Elohim, Tzabaoth, Shaddai. More appropriate perhaps would be the names of the six Authors of Wickedness: Acteus, Magelsius, Ormenus, Lycas, Nikon and Mimon. On the other hand, you might just invent whatever sounds appeal to you, provided they comply with to your secret desire.

[7](#) Benvenuto Cellini, *Vita di Benvenuto di Maestro Giovanni Cellini fiorentino, scritta, per lui medesimo* (written between 1558-63). Author's translation.

[8](#) In some countries small children are still used for clairvoyance, it being thought that their young minds, uncluttered by worldly experience, are more receptive to the supernatural.

[9](#) As was emphasized in the chapter containing the master rituals, astral forms must be dismissed at the conclusion of every rite. In demonic evocation this is especially important. The courteous form of words in which Cellini's priest addressed the demons in the Coliseum may have been on the lines of the following dismissal, typical of many found in the old *grimoires*: 'O demon, seeing that thou hast duly answered all my questions, I hereby license thee to depart without injury to man or beast. Depart, I say, and be thou willing and ready to come to me whenever conjured to do so by the sacred rites of magic. I now beseech thee to withdraw quietly, and may peace remain forever between me and thee.'

THREE MAGICAL INTENTIONS

By now it may seem to the reader that given the Table of Intentions and the master rituals, everyone has all he needs to realise his fondest wishes. Because the potential efficacy of each rite is guaranteed *ex opere operato*, nothing apparently stands in the way of success. Unfortunately, this is not quite the case. It is true that every rite is capable of effecting whatever intention lies behind its performance, but capability does not automatically mean success. The trouble is that things can and often do go wrong: an astrological calculation may be inaccurate, the correspondences inappropriate or the adept may at the very last minute fail to engage with the power evoked by ritual. These, however, are mistakes which in retrospect can usually be identified and so corrected. A more serious cause of failure is the karmic handicap most magicians start off with.

Recently the word karma has come to be all things to all people, so we had better establish what we mean by it in the present context. According to esoteric tradition each of us goes through life with the characteristics of whatever moment marked our arrival on the physical plane. The cosmic tendencies of that moment, in occult language its ‘vibrations’, then accompany us through life and subtly determine its general trend. One of the purposes of astrology is to reveal that trend to us through an interpretation of the planetary data at the moment of our birth, and where appropriate, relate this information to the distribution of the planets, as well to our circumstances, at a later date.

Because these natal ‘vibrations’ determine the trend our life is likely to follow, they are to that extent complicit in the reincarnation process. Earlier we examined how a quintessential consciousness, or to follow Plato, a kind of personal *noumenon* can survive the dissolution of our personality, having survived countless previous ones already. This is the spark which, when due to begin a new incarnation, collaborates with the nascent personality of a human embryo, although their complete integration may well happen only at birth. We must suppose that the vibrations (let's drop the inverted commas) peculiar to the moment of conception or birth attract a *noumenon* whose development will be advanced by whatever lies ahead. It is for this reason that defenders of

reincarnation maintain, sometimes too simplistically, that each of us inherits at birth a karmic debt, our subsequent misfortunes (and emphasis is usually put on those) being what we deserve in the light of past transgressions. Life thus becomes a remedial process governed by the law of karma.

As a working hypothesis this is probably as sound as any other. The purpose of magic, you will recall, is to effect changes in conformity with the will. It follows therefore that on occasion such changes may conflict with what is meant to flow from the law of karma: an adept may, for instance, crave instant riches, while karmic law demands that he endure penury for the good of his soul. In such cases karmic law generally, though not always, prevails.

When karmic law is overcome, the adept has first to recognize the lesson he would have learned had things taken their normal course. In occult-speak he is required to confront the Dweller on the Threshold¹, a personalized form of his aggregate debt to date and an experience normally encountered only after death. This absolves him of his karmic obligation and allows his magical intention to be realized. Many beginners find nevertheless that their early experience of magic is marred by a not unrelated run of bad luck, a period when things just will not go right. It is as if they are undergoing a kind of purgatory. Time and again the novice magician will lament his misfortunes, complaining that, far from improving his lot, magic has made it far worse. Fortunately these effects do wear off and are forgotten once success begins to attend each magical operation. So if your rituals do not immediately meet with the sure-fire success you expected, be patient and try to understand why.

The last few paragraphs are perhaps unduly pessimistic, since karmic restraints are not as many or as binding as is suggested here. Indeed, an experienced magician can often overcome them quite easily, although unless he learns why they were there in the first place, he will face an identical set of conditions in the future. Understanding we are told, as much as expiation, is what ultimately frees us from the cycle of death and rebirth.²

With experience therefore the adept can be confident of overcoming whatever handicap he faces. If one method of realizing his wishes were to fail, he will know at least a dozen others he can try. And if each of these is

individually unsuccessful, the cumulative effect is often sufficient to bring ultimate success. This may well take time so in the next few pages we shall examine three magical intentions, all important ones, in order to see how the recommendations given earlier may be supplemented. The intentions chosen for this purpose are love, eternal youth and healing.

LOVE

There are probably more love charms in existence than stars in the sky, some quaint, some crude and a few quite beautiful. All are potentially effective. Their merit lies not so much in the procedures they recommend as in the effect they have on the mind of whoever performs them. Firstly, they concentrate his attention on the person of his choice, in whose mind a reciprocal interest is telepathically aroused. Secondly, they link the adept's intention to the 'love aspect' of the universal mind. The charm he is engaged upon then draws down the force needed to accomplish the intention behind it.

From this it will be clear that a talisman, suitably consecrated, is an indispensable weapon in the lover's armoury. In addition he has a vast stock of other charms, spells and incantations to assist him. One is given below. It belongs to Celtic magic, and as such is eminently suitable for people of European descent, though not of course to them exclusively. It is even claimed—without, it must be said, persuasive evidence—to derive from a druidic tradition preserved on Anglesey.³ Called Lover's Mandrake, this charm was still used at the beginning of the last century by love-sick farm-hands in Wales. The version given below retains the Welsh incantations but a translation is provided for those who wish to use it.

The ritual, as its name suggests, involves that notorious vegetable the mandrake, a member of the potato family ([figure 27](#)). The true mandrake (*Mandragora officinarum*) is native to Mediterranean countries but has long been cultivated elsewhere, prized not only for its magical properties but also as an emetic, purgative and narcotic.

Its reputation owes much to its forked or bifurcated root, a formation that resembles, at least to those disposed to see it, a miniature human being. Sharing this characteristic and thus often used by way of substitute, is white bryony (*Bryonia alba*) and its close sibling, red bryony (*Bryonia dioica*), both recommended here on account of their wide distribution. (In China, ginseng root, thick and fleshy but seldom forked, was similarly favoured.) Found in moist hedgerows, briony is identifiable by its long trailing stems and vine-shaped leaves ([figure 28](#)). The adept's first task, then, is to go out and find some.

The rite⁴ is undertaken when the moon is waxing, the optimum time said to be when the Pleiades are visible in the night sky.⁵ The adept rises before dawn—preferably on a Wednesday, the mandrake being traditionally ruled by Mercury—and silently makes his way to the site where his mandrake lies buried. He must equip himself with a torch and a spade, since his first task will be to dig up the plant without damaging its precious root. As he digs, he recites the following mantra which, apart from its magical purpose, will help him contain his temper: ‘*Gwyn eu byd y pridd, y gwreiddyn a'r noson hon.*’ (‘Blessed be this Earth, this root, this night.’)



Figure 27



Figure 28

When at last the root has been exhumed, he may return home with his prize, though the chances are he will be sadly disappointed to see how little it resembles a human form. The most he can hope for are a few protuberances that might with some imagination be said to resemble arms and legs. This is where nature needs to be improved upon, for he has now to carve the root very slightly in order to give it a more acceptable shape. Thanks to such surgery the mandrake should end up with two arms and two legs, even possibly some kind of face.

Thus fashioned, the root represents the person with whom the adept is in love, and so it must be named. For this it is sufficient to hold it in the left-hand and, forming a pentagram over it with the right, say, 'I name you N. N.' Needless to say, any sexual characteristics the root may present should not blatantly contradict those of the person named. There is no need to be too fussy about this, but it would clearly be inappropriate to leave a lady mandrake with a phallus-like nodule between her makeshift 'legs'. Or, come to that, a male one with no nodule at all.

The next step is to return the mandrake to the earth. Some recommend that it be buried in a churchyard or at a crossroads, the latter preferably three-way, as both places fall under the protection of Hecate. Fortunately the adept's own garden (or even a window box or flower pot) will do at a pinch. The top of the root should be covered with soil but a few green shoots may be allowed to peep out above ground. A cross should then be traced with any silver object above the site where the mandrake is interred.

All that remains is to have at hand a mixture of one part milk and three parts water to which has been added a drop of the magician's own blood. This libation is poured slowly over the soil while the appropriate words are spoken:

*Wrth y bedd y gwaed a'r llaeth
Wnaeth gadw N. i mi'n gaeth.*

*Blood and milk upon the grave
Will make N. evermore my slave.*

You will be glad to know that with this, the adept's predawn labors are over and he may crawl thankfully back into bed.

For the next few weeks the only attention the mandrake will need is occasional watering, but an effort should be made to visit it at least every other day. When the next lunar cycle commences the root must be disinterred, again one hour before sunrise, and the following words recited over it:

*Lloer, lân dy wên a gwen dy fron,
Rho' dy fendith y noson hon
Ar fy nghais er gwan fy nghri
A boed i'm cariad garu fi.*

*Moon above so palely shining
Bestow this night thy sacred blessing
On my prayer and ritual plea
To fill N.'s heart with love for me.*

By now the tiny root will have acquired tremendous talismanic properties, forming a link between the adept, the person it is meant to represent and the cosmic mind. Its preparation, however, is still not complete, for it has now to be dried. This can be done by hanging it up in a well-aired room, though the seriously lovelorn may cheat by placing the root in a warm oven or on top of a radiator, thereby accelerating the process. If feasible it should rest on a paper bearing the Venusian inscription below ([figure 29](#)). In any case certain words must be spoken over it. These are:

*Y gwres a lysg y ffrwyth bach hy'
Yw'r fflam sy'n llosgi 'nghalon i.*

*The fruit is scorched by that same heat
Which warms my heart with every beat.*

Whatever the method adopted, the mandrake should, if feasible, be passed through some Venusian incense for three consecutive days.



Figure 29

Once dried—by whatever method—the mandrake is ready for the final piece of magic, assuming of course that the desired effect has not already occurred. For this purpose the adept obtains a pin or needle and plunges it straight through the little creature's heart, not with any intention of harming it, but to smite it with love. As he does so, he ‘projects’ his desire with all the force he can muster onto the person whose affection he craves. The mandrake, still impaled, should then be left on a windowsill where it can see the Moon by night. There it will do its utmost to ensure the adept's love does not go unrequited.

Those who quail at the effort involved in this charm may prefer another which likewise has horticultural connections. This one is called the Magic Rose, and in order to perform it you must rise between three and four on any morning in June and pick a full-blown red rose. Return to your room and hold the flower for a full five minutes above a chafing dish in which charcoal and flowers-of-sulphur (a pinch, no more, and be sure to keep the window open) are burning.⁶ The rose should then be folded in a piece of paper bearing your name and that of the person you love. Seal the paper with three seals and bury it under the tree from which the rose was taken. The letter A, representing the Latin tag *omnia vincit amor*, is traced above the spot. There the rose is left until July 6, when at midnight it must be dug up and the little parcel conveyed to your room. Sleep with it under your pillow for three consecutive nights. Not only will you have dreams of great portent but win over the person you love.

Similar dreams, incidentally, can be induced by grating together a walnut, hazelnut and a very small portion of nutmeg. This powder should be mixed with butter and brown sugar so as to make several pellets. Seven of these may be taken—dissolved in the mouth rather than swallowed—

one hour before bed in order to induce revelatory dreams. A laurel leaf under your pillow and an invocation to Brizo, the Hellenic goddess of sleep, are supposed also to help.

Sweet dreams.

ETERNAL YOUTH

In the past, several famous magicians have looked remarkably youthful in old age, among them were Cagliostro and Casanova whose smooth skin was much admired by the pockmarked courtiers among whom they moved. Similarly, the youthfulness of the mysterious Comte de Saint-Germain remains a source of interest today, even if he was not, as popular belief once supposed, over 2000 years of age.⁷ But the pursuit of youth, unlike its attainment,⁸ is far from being confined to magicians: millions dedicate their money, time and energy to the same goal.

Before we proceed it is as well to be clear what we mean. It is important to remember that the quality of youth consists of more than a youthful appearance. The latter may, with a little effort, be acquired temporarily by people no longer young—some methods are offered in [Appendix 1](#)—but the result is no more than a simulacrum of youth, a smooth young mask from which old eyes peer. The point is that youth is as much a state of mind as a bloom on the skin, so the first challenge is to recapture that state of mind. To do so, retire to a quiet place at a fixed time each day, surrounding yourself with things associated with your youth or whose taste or smell transports you back to younger days. It is impossible to tell you exactly what you need. Clearly it is something you must work out for yourself. For the narrator in Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, the taste of a cake dipped in tea or the sight and smell of hawthorn were just two of the things that involuntarily allowed his past to invade his present. For you it may be the scent of pine-needles, the feel of sand between your toes or the taste of wild strawberries that do the same, enabling you to experience the past in a way more immediate and a thousand times more vividly than anything consciously remembered.

Above all, do not underestimate the power of thought. If constructive thinking can mould the etheric substances that lie outside you, how much more easily can it induce changes in that intimate fabric which is your body—the tangible expression of yourself. The phenomenon known as the stigmata, hypnotic suggestion, the placebo effect and psychosomatic illness are all proof that the mind can bring about physical changes. Truly, to think young is to be young—and look it!

As for magical methods of rejuvenation, we shall start by looking at two famous, if unsavoury, examples, both of academic interest, having found their way into literature. One involves ritual murder and the other its astral equivalent. Neither is recommended.

In the first, the magician seeks to exchange his own, presumably decrepit, body for that of a young and healthy person. This demands effort since not only must the replacement match these requirements but must have a vulnerable astral body as well. In addition, the victim's natal horoscope should offer the prospect of an agreeable life, thus imposing on the adept the extra burden of finding a victim whose birthday is astrologically propitious. No easy task for someone who, presumably, may well be approaching his dotage.

Once the victim has been lured into the magician's sanctuary he is rendered unconscious and placed inside the circle, his head pointing westwards. A special lunar ritual is conducted, with projection of the astral body taking place at its climax. Soon afterwards the adept vacates his own astral body and gate-crashes his way into that of his befuddled victim, probably encountering little, if any, resistance. Surprised (to say the least) and understandably confused, the dispossessed victim will automatically seek refuge in the astral shell newly vacated by the usurper. At this stage an understanding accomplice delivers a pre-arranged *coup de grâce* to the adept's former body, now superfluous, enabling its erstwhile owner, once restored to consciousness, to flex his youthful muscles and contemplate a new life ahead of him.

The second of these rejuvenating techniques is based on the same principle, and it too demands a telepathic rapport between the magician and an accomplice. Again, the adept has first to set about finding his new body, which in this case will be that of a small child whose astrological prospects he deems propitious. The child need not be brought to the scene of the ritual, but his exact whereabouts must be known. Here again the rite adopted is a lunar one. At the end of it the adept projects from his physical body, having assured himself that the astral body of his victim is accessible. He then mentally instructs his accomplice not only to 'kill' the body he recently vacated but to mutilate it so badly he finds it abhorrent. He thereby becomes even more determined to assume—'consume' is the word used in one text—the identity of his young victim, occupying both his astral and physical bodies.

Rumor has it that in 19 BC the Roman poet Virgil, who by the late Middle Ages was being accredited with with all sorts of magical powers,⁹ did not succumb, as generally believed, to fever at Brundisium but died while attempting the procedure just described. The story goes that he persuaded a servant to chop his body into small pieces which were then placed in a barrel of salt. There they were to remain for nine days while an oil lamp burned nearby. Throughout this critical period strict secrecy was observed, with only the magician and his accomplice aware of what was being essayed. However, after seven days elapsed, the Emperor Augustus grew anxious and summoned the servant who promptly confessed what had happened. With his retinue in tow, the Emperor rushed to the spot where the barrel was standing, peered over the rim and saw Virgil's head. So incensed was he that he promptly killed the luckless servant but had no sooner done so than there appeared on the scene a naked child who ran three times around the cask and cursed all present for their inopportune meddling.

Some maintain that news of this misadventure inspired Ovid to describe in Book 7 of his *Metamorphoses* how Medea rejuvenated Aeson by slitting his throat and putting his remains in a pot, enabling him to return shortly afterwards in the guise of a much younger man. As Ovid died before Virgil, the claim may be discounted but such tales are commonplace enough to suggest some basis in fact.

Other methods of rejuvenation are not so repugnant, although some make heavy demands on those with the stamina needed to attempt them. One example is a procedure based on that described by Cagliostro in his *Egyptian Freemasonry* and later reproduced by Eliphas Lévi in the *History of Magic*.¹⁰ This involves a retreat of forty days and a regimen to daunt all but the most dedicated. The adept is instructed to withdraw to a deserted part of the country, taking with him only one friend or loyal companion. The retreat commences at the Full Moon in May when for the first seven days a strict fast is observed. During it the adept should drink only fresh dew, preferably collected from sprouting corn with a cloth of pure white linen.¹¹ A few sweet, fresh herbs may be eaten during the day, should the pangs of hunger be irresistible, while at night a meal of white meat, followed by a piece of wholemeal bread dipped in honey, is permitted.¹² Before retiring to bed the adept bathes in warm water in which such

aromatic herbs as sage, valerian, vervain and balm (*Melissa officinalis*) have been steeped. At dawn on the seventh day the adept performs an Egyptian solar ritual, and that night swallows seven drops of the miraculous draught known as *aurum potabile* or drinkable gold.

As the metal of the Sun, gold was held precious by most ancient civilizations. In this context however, the reference, as in alchemical medicine generally, is to something other than transmuted metal or *aurum Raymundi*, so named after the 13th Century alchemist, Raymond Lull. What is being referred to is its potable equivalent, the ‘vital dew’ of Ostanes the Mede, a tincture known to the Byzantine monk Morienus and his contemporary Khalid ibn Yazī (who reputedly introduced alchemy to Islam) a good half century before Lull's birth. For Chinese alchemists such as Zheng Yin, it was a manifestation of the Tao, a concept dear to Ko Hung (Ge Hong), the fourth-century sage and author of the *Baopuzi*. While Ko Hung recommended herbal medicines (and mineral-based ones even more) he insisted that immortality could be gained only by partaking of the divine elixir.

Few readers will be able to obtain a flagon of spagyric gold unless they know a cooperative alchemist. A substitute must therefore be concocted. In making it we are guided by those occult correspondences that form the basis of practical magic. The ingredients listed in [Appendix I](#) have been chosen because of their well-attested ability to combine syncretically to produce the same effect as the finest *aurum potabile*.¹³ After swallowing this the adept has completed the preliminary stage of his retreat.

There follows a more inactive period during which he retires to the privacy of his room and seeks in quiet reflection to recapture the feelings of his youth, its excitements, its pleasures and, no less part of it, its deeply felt anxieties and adolescent disappointments. From now on his evening meal consists of a broth of lean beef and rice seasoned with sage, followed by a glass of fresh juice. On the seventeenth day—ideally on a Wednesday, the *dies mercurii*—he takes, on waking, six drops of the Balm of Azoth, increasing the dosage by two drops until the thirty-second day.

The Azoth which gives its name to this beverage is, strictly speaking, the quintessential catalyst which transmutes base metal into gold. Its action is twofold. In the first place, it acts as a mental stimulant, reinforcing—and thus helping realize—the experimenter's desire to recapture his youth, while secondly, it helps induce the appropriate physiological changes.

Indeed, you will see that many of its ingredients are known for their tonic effect on the human organism.

Throughout this latter period the adept must perform a solar and mercurial ritual on alternate days at the appropriate time. These rituals, whether conforming to Kabbalistic tradition or any other, will be dedicated to youth. On the thirty-second day the magician takes to his bed and from then on swallows a dessert spoonful of Universal Medicine at the hour of Mercury. This medicine is said by Lévi to be nothing less than astral Mercury. Other occultists associate it with the *prima materia* of spagyric theory, being the essence or substratum of all material things, comparable to the Tao which invests matter with different properties according to varying combinations of Yin and Yang. Being of the Earth it has an affinity with the sphere of Malkuth, so for Kabbalists the manufacture of it is conducted under the joint auspices of Sandalphon and Uriel, respectively the regents of the planet and the element.

On the thirty-ninth day, *dies terribilis et sublimis*, the magician must drink the *ros vitae*, the very dew of life, which Lévi describes as the Elixir of Acharat. Ten drops are taken in two tablespoonfuls of red wine at the climax of a solar ritual.¹⁴ This rite may be dedicated to the pagan god Maponus,¹⁵ or for those of a Theosophical or New Age disposition, to Sanat Kumara, regarded as the regent of our planet. Kabbalists may wish to stick with the divine youth of Tifareth, hoping, like him, to span eternity yet remain untouched by time.

So there you are. When next you find yourself with forty days to spare, here is a good way to spend them. It is said that Cardinal de Rohan followed this regimen under the guidance of Cagliostro and according to some, emerged looking half his age, though others thought he looked far older than when he began. Still, the rest and the diet are bound to do you good. And, combined with a touch of magic, who knows what miracles might follow?

HEALING

Raphael is the archangel traditionally associated with good health. He is often described as standing in the Sun, and the solar rays typify his healing ministry.¹⁶ Their warmth and brightness enable us better to imagine—and thereby benefit from—the remedial power available when we solicit his help.

Sunlight and healing were similarly linked by the Egyptians who attributed a therapeutic role to Ra when, as Lord of the Rays, he was deemed the source of life, health and physical fitness (☉). In the classical world too, the sun became linked, at least by the fifteenth-century BC, with the Pythian Apollo, to whose shrine at Delphi people flocked to consult the Oracle about, among other things, their health. For them, as later for the Romans, the flame-robed Apollo was the supreme health-giver, being the father of Aesculapius, god of medicine. Both also took on the name, as well as the function, of an earlier divinity, Paean, physician to the gods

Rituals intended for healing or the promotion of good health are usually performed on the seventh or twentieth day of the *lunar* month. The origin of the first of these dates may lie in the classical tradition that Apollo was born on the seventh day of the month. Because this supernal nativity occurred in the shade of a palm tree, palms have always been sacred to him. In Kabbalistic tradition they are sacred to Mercury, which reminds us that in the Fourth Homeric Hymn it was Apollo himself who bestowed divine powers on Hermes (Mercury), so the correspondence is not accidental. Some magicians perform an annual ritual on July 13th, intended to provide a year's good health, but the only apparent significance of that date is that a week of games in honour of Apollo, the *Ludi Apollinares*, were held in Rome during July, reaching their climax on the 13th.

Before turning to magic for good health, make sure you have not overlooked more commonplace means to that end. Magic can certainly help but it would be wrong to go through all the fuss and bother when a couple of aspirins do the job more quickly. In New Age circles you will hear lots of talk about herbal nostrums, reiki, radiesthesia, spirit-healers and other unorthodox therapies. Some may even work. That said, it would

be foolish to shun more orthodox, evidence-based treatments completely. After all, it does no harm to hedge one's bets.

There are many theories as to how astral (for want of a better word) therapy works; multi-coloured rays, angelic ministers, spirit doctors and magnetic currents are among the explanations offered. What probably happens is the astral power invoked by the magician or healer acts upon the patient, probably via his astral body, in such a way that his subconscious wills his recovery. There is no hocus-pocus about this: the cure as well as the cause of many diseases may, at least in part, be psychosomatic. Because this process involves the subconscious it can even benefit others without their collaboration. All that happens is that the force created is directed to the patient's subconscious where it sets about doing its recuperative work.

Sometimes the process may be a slow one, in which case you should sustain your efforts and consider how best to supplement them: a more auspicious time for your ritual work, the importation of additional correspondences, a specially constructed talisman, all these can help.^{[17](#)}

The cooperation of the patient might also be sought so that he can get on with a little useful Couéism of his own. This is particularly important in the case of someone whose resolve to get well has been undermined by disease and, sadly, the indifference of doctors. Emile Coué (1857-1926) taught that ideas which help cause or prolong disease may be eliminated by means of auto-suggestion, even if this involves no more than the daily repetition of his famous maxim, 'Every day in and in every way I grow better and better.' In his view it was no good exhorting sick people to buck up or shake off their ailments if deep down they were already convinced they were doomed. This was why the conscious will to live was insufficient unless nourished by an inner certainty that recovery was possible. That certainty is what the Coué sought to instill in his patients.

During his treatment the patient should, if possible, be encouraged to let his mind dwell on solar imagery. Let him imagine himself soaking up the sun's rays while his illness evaporates from his body. In this way the corresponding astral forces will be attracted to him. Try, surreptitiously if need be, to surround the patient with as many as possible of the correspondences used in your ritual. An excellent link can be forged between him and your efforts on his behalf if you introduce to his home or his bedside some of the things used in your rite—sprigs of heliotrope or

laurel come to mind. These objects will also attune his subconscious to the subtle influences at work to ensure his full return to health.

Details must be selected to suit the circumstances of the case and by now you should know how to work these out for yourself. Needless to say, you should never worry a sick person with your magical pre-occupations, especially if all he wants is peace and quiet. Relapse, not recovery, will follow if you bully an invalid into filling his mind with sunny thoughts while reciting mantras in a bed bedecked with laurels.

It is an excellent idea to place a small vase of wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) beside the patient's bed, since this freshens the atmosphere considerably.¹⁸ Another good idea is to keep a candle or votive light burning in the room, since the flame not only symbolizes the evocation of astral aid, but shines like a beacon in the astral world where it attracts the desired influences. Ritual incense may also be burned, although you should always consult the patient before importing incense into the sick-room. Finally, an amulet—one favoured by Christian Kabbalist talismans bore the acronym *Ananisapta*¹⁹—may also be helpful, the protection and cure of disease being among their earliest functions. Do not forget, however, that all talismanic objects must be prepared according to the instructions given in an earlier chapter. Sometimes those intended to promote health are dedicated to the spirit Buer.²⁰

People who are new to occultism frequently asked what magic can and cannot achieve in matters of health and sickness. They know, for example, that no amount of incantation on their part is going to cause a new leg to grow after the first has been amputated. And yet they know or have heard that organic changes do occur as the result of astral therapy. The latter can dissolve tumors, unlock joints, revive dead muscles and repair cell damage. Why then can it not cause new limbs to grow? The answer may lie in the fact that what magic does, according to the definition given earlier, is effect changes. These, then, are well within its scope. The production of new limbs, however, would not involve a change in something already present but a creation *ex nihilo*, and that seems to be something not even magic can accomplish. Where change is concerned, however, you may apply magic with the assurance that it can and does work wonders. There will, however, be occasions when no amount of magic—or medical attention—will arrest the progress of an ailment or

disease. Neither physician nor occultist can expect to challenge nature and not lose once in a while. We might end this chapter by reminding ourselves that in our lives we should always be ready to face the certainty of death. Indeed, part of living is simply a preparation for it.

[1](#) Known also as Guardian of the Threshold and normally encountered post mortem, we shall again come across this intimidating figure in the next chapter.

[2](#) The thought of past lives fascinates many people. It is reported that previous incarnations can be remembered when some external stimulus attunes the subconscious mind to the etheric ‘wavelength’ carrying the appropriate memory. The pineal gland, reputedly the Third Eye, is said to play a role in the process. To encourage this, one is advised to let the mind wander, as in a technique known to psychologists as ‘free association’, pausing at some point to note down any impressions received, no matter how trivial or foolish. Among them may lie the clues needed to re-acquaint us with the pastor, in occult-speak, permit access to the Akashic record wherein it is stored. Hypnotic regression is also reported to help, though our vulnerability to suggestion and our capacity for self-delusion need then to be taken into account.

[3](#) Julius Caesar claims, almost certainly in error, that the Druidic Order sprang up in Britain and spread to Gaul. What is more plausible is that candidates to the priesthood often travelled from the continent to Britain for instruction in the higher mysteries of their religion. The historian Tacitus (*Annals* XIV) recounts how, in AD 61, the last of the British Druids, by then confined to the island of Anglesey (Mona), were slaughtered on the banks of the Menai Strait by the soldiers of Gaius Suetonius Paulinus, Governor of Britain.

[4](#) These instructions for harvesting the mandrake differ from those provided in the 4th Century Herbarium of Apuleius (*Herbarium Apuleii Platonici*). There, the adept is told to tie his dog, an animal associated with Hecate, to the plant, then (from afar!) persuade the animal to tug the root out of the ground. In this way it is the dog, not its master, that goes mad and dies upon hearing the affronted shrieks of the mandrake. Animal lovers will be reassured to know that the services of the dog may nowadays be dispensed with.

[5](#) These stars, the seven daughters of Atlas, can be observed close to the constellation of Orion throughout the summer months, usually from around June 15. They set in early November. The festival of Halloween stems from a Druid ritual coinciding with the midnight culmination of the Pleiades when, it was believed, the veil dividing the living from the dead was at its thinnest. For Tennyson the Pleiades glittered ‘like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a silver braid.’

[6](#) A sprig of rosemary added to the charcoal is said to induce warmth in the heart of the beloved. A more passionate heat can be aroused by administering the herbal aphrodisiac given in [Appendix 1](#).

[7](#) Cagliostro, having met him at a dinner party in the 1750's and doubtless sensing competition, labelled him ‘a celebrated and gifted imposter’ but generously acknowledged his enviable gift of the gab.

[8](#) There is a cautionary anecdote about the elixir of life. In its heyday the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn had among its members a venerable gentleman who years previously had brewed this most precious of tinctures. Unfortunately, he had been afraid to drink it. When at last he found the courage to open the phial, it was only to discover that every last drop had evaporated. The recipe for one such elixir was given—ironically enough on his deathbed—by Trithemius. Its ingredients are calomel, gentian, cinnamon, aniseed, nard and mace. The recommended dosage is 5 grammes every morning and night for a month, then mornings only for a second month, and thereafter three times a week, presumably *per saecula saeculorum*.

[9](#) See, for example, Eclogue VIII. Such was Virgil's magical reputation that the Welsh word for chemist (fferyllydd) is derived from his name, the skills of the chemist/alchemist having once been regarded as nothing short of magical. The poet's work was used for random divinatory purposes (Sortes Virgilianae) well into modern times.

[10](#) Eliphas Lévi, *History of Magic* (Rider, London, 1969), pp. 303 ff.

[11](#) Dew-and May dew in particular – has always been thought to have curative properties. In the 17th century it was widely used as an eye lotion and as a cure for skin disorders. A treatment for goiter involved gathering May dew just before daybreak from a grave of a recently deceased young man. The patient passed his hand 3 times over the grave before applying the dew to his neck. Soil, too, was held to be beneficial to health. Sir Francis Bacon, having observed many robust-looking ploughmen, believed its smell alone was a tonic. For George Gurdjieff the smell of cattle was therapeutic. In 1922 the writer Katherine Mansfield slept in a hammock above the cow stalls at the Master's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in Fontainebleau. She died less than a year later. (Aleister Crowley was also a visitor to the Institute, but though offered lunch, was not encouraged to stay.)

[12](#) The Comte de Saint-Germain once attributed his longevity to a diet of oats and grilled chicken-breast. In modern France the name Saint-Germain Tea is given not to an elixir of life but to a laxative drink containing senna.

[13](#) The ingredients given both for this and other tonic medicines do not always match those listed by Lévi or by his main source, Cagliostro. Apart from their use in this particular operation several are of everyday benefit also.

[14](#) For the sake of completeness it should be mentioned that some adepts do without a specially prepared elixir. Instead, profiting from the active co-operation of a male accomplice, they replace it with what Verlaine described as:

Lait suprême, divin phosphore,

Sentant bon de la fleur d'amandier...

[15](#) Mabon (latin: Maponus) is the Apollo of the Celts. Indeed, both names are conjoined in several dedications dating from the Roman occupation of Britain and Gaul. The name means Great Son and, as such, personifies youthfulness and vigour, hence of course the association with Apollo. In contemporary wicca, Mabon is associated with the Autumnal equinox but I am unaware of any historical reason for that choice. Some people dedicate this ritual to Belatucadros, a Celtic deity whose name means 'Bright and Beautiful One'. In my opinion this is based on a misunderstanding. Despite his name, Belatucadros seems to be a Celtic version of Mars in his military role. Indeed he is frequently invoked (as at Netherby) as *Deo Marti Belatucadro*.

[16](#) His name means 'God has Healed'. In the Book of Tobit the Archangel declares that he was sent from Heaven to restore Tobit's sight. Rudolf Steiner maintained that Raphael was most active during the Spring.

[17](#) The sefirothic correspondences are: Kether: cranium; Hokmah: face (left side); Binah: face (right side); Hesed: left arm; Geburah: right; Tifareth: heart and chest; Netsah: loins/hips; Hod: legs; Yesod: reproductive organs; Malkuth: the whole body.

[18](#) Expected of magicians is a knowledge of herbs and their uses. Within the system of correspondences each herb has been assigned to one of the twelve zodiacal signs or brought within the influence of a particular planet. An acquaintance with these correspondences (listed previously) will enable the reader to select appropriate herbal remedies. Readers with access to Nicholas Culpeper's Complete Herbal or Mrs. (Maud) Grievés *A Modern Herbal*, now available online, will discover there the astrological correspondences attributed to most medicinal plants.

[19](#) This is an acrostic of ‘Antidotum Nazareni Auferat Necem Intoxicationis, Sanctificet Alimenta Pocula Trinitas Alma’, and favoured by Christian Kabbalists. It was worn as an amulet, usually around the wrist.

[20](#) Buer first appears, at least to the author's knowledge, in the *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum*, an appendix to Johann Weyer's *De praestigiis daemonum* (1577), surfacing later in the *Lemegeton* or *Lesser Key of Solomon*. Though described as the Grand President of Hell, he seems well disposed to human beings, happy to instruct them in the medicinal properties of plants, as well as curing them of their ailments. It is important to remember that ‘Buer’, as in the case of others like him, is no more than the name attributed to his *function*. We have no need to accept his existence *per se* - and certainly not in the shape attributed to him by the illustrator of de Plancy's 1863 edition of the *Dictionnaire Infernal* (see Chapter 11, footnote 1).

DEATH AND THE MEANING OF LIFE

According to the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) death is the inspiration of all philosophy since its inevitability leads us to seek a meaning to the brief span of time we spend here on earth. For Schopenhauer death is the aim, indeed the very purpose, of life. Yet although he stressed its inevitability and the suffering some endure on their way towards it, he denied its absolute reality. For him the will to live, something common to us all, demonstrates that death, though phenomenally real—being an event that indisputably happens—is unreal in absolute terms. Sustained by the will to live, our selfhood cannot be extinguished when we die.

Like him many of us seek grounds for believing our personality (or at least our sense of self) will outlive the dissolution of our bodies. Physical immortality, regardless of what we do to preserve our vim and vigour, is by general consent impossible, even if some simple organisms—unicellular protozoa was the term I remember from my schooldays—can reproduce *ad infinitum*, forever splitting in two and provided no calamity befalls them, leaving no corpses in their desultory wake. Research has shown, too, that when optimum conditions prevail animal tissue can be kept alive *in vitro* almost indefinitely. From this biologists infer that living cells are potentially immortal, although their interdependence within a larger unit like the human body means an accidental flaw in one may compromise the whole. Like the proverbial chain, we are as strong as the weakest link.

Speaking of links, in [Chapter 1](#) we discussed the connection between our thinking and the physical structure of the brain. Here occultists are at one with science, albeit not for long. Where they leave science behind is in supposing there exists a psychogonic¹ extension of the human organism, which, for want of a better word, they call the astral body. This entity, you may remember, is closely associated with the physical body, being a product of its cerebral activity and is, if you like, the personification of its self-awareness. As stated earlier, human beings are unique in being not only conscious of themselves but also *conscious of themselves being conscious*. And it is this that encouraged us to postulate the existence of

the astral body, an entity that enjoys—and its function requires it—a quasi-independent existence, one not irredeemably bound up with the physical organism. It is a higher ‘consciousness’, an accrued awareness of oneself, that empowers us to survive physical death.

Some people argue, at times naively, that a similar process occurs whenever we lose ordinary consciousness, even during sleep, pointing out that seldom does concussion or anaesthesia destroy the self-awareness of a lifetime. If it did, there would be no return to normality once the effect had worn off. The belief is that our displaced consciousness is sympathetically attracted to its astral embodiment, where it takes up temporary residence until the physiological changes that expelled it are no more. (The individual is said then to have ‘come to himself’.) What is nowadays called a near-death experience lends support to this theory, especially as those who survive such an occurrence frequently report that in the course of it they occupied what they call a ‘body of light’. Such accounts are entirely compatible with what was said earlier about astral projection.

When illness or injury brings with it a real possibility of death, our consciousness may hover between the two bodies, physical and astral, uncertain which of them to occupy. It may then observe deceased friends or relatives who, survivors report, are on hand to greet the new arrival. (Herein lies perhaps the explanation for those deathbed visions which have long intrigued psychical researchers.²) In cases of violent death the transition to the astral body may on occasion be so brusque that it takes time for the discarnate consciousness to recover its bearings. Indeed in several of his books Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding (1882–1970) describes how during World War II he helped dead airmen reconcile themselves to their post-mortem environment, many of them not even aware they were dead.

It is a something of a nuisance to have to call our post-mortem self ‘the astral body’, when the more usual word ‘spirit’ is not only shorter but, even better, free from the stellar connotations that beset the term astral. However, the astral body does apparently retain certain quasi-physical characteristics which render the word ‘spirit’ unsatisfactory. Nor would ‘spirit’ be consistent with the anti-dualistic stand we have hitherto adopted.

This confusion is not a new one. It existed in the minds of the ancient Egyptians who credited the *ka*, comparable to what we have called the astral body, with a semi-material existence after death. Indeed, it was

routinely offered food when its owner died, doubtless in the belief that the essence or ‘substance’, as Aquinas would put it, of the food—its own equivalent of *ka*—would provide it with nourishment. That the *ka* was the virtual equivalent of the deceased person, endowed with all his characteristics, makes it comparable to what the Greeks would later call his εἰδωλον or double.³ Though subordinate to the physical body, the *ka* was nevertheless independent of it and during its owner's lifetime might move freely from place to place, separating itself from the physical organism and rejoining it at will. Only after death did it permanently leave its physical counterpart and come into its own.

From now on, in order to avoid confusion, we shall refer to the post-mortem astral body as the astral self: the term ‘astral body’ risks in this context sounding too much like a cadaver lost in outer space.

Probably the first thing that strikes the astral self once it has passed over is the similarity between its new surroundings and the physical world it left behind. There may be trees, gardens and houses, just as on Earth, although *revenants* are apt to describe them as ‘different’ or ‘more beautiful’. The reason for this, as mentioned, before, is that the visitor creates his own virtual environment so few end up disappointed. Indeed, spiritualistic literature is replete with banal descriptions of what life is like beyond the veil.⁴ There, it seems, musically minded people gather in vast halls to listen to spirit orchestras, doctors pursue their researches in well-equipped laboratories (without recourse to vivisection), great writers write and, given that someone must keep the lawns trim, spirit gardeners garden away contentedly. There used even to be reports of animal-lovers running rehabilitation centers for cattle slaughtered in the stockyards of Chicago”, now gone, and suddenly transported, much to their bewilderment, to lush spirit meadows. Everyone, in short, is assured of a heavenly time, all of their own making.

Before then—and on this occultists, normally a disputatious bunch, seem to concur—the newly deceased will have observed, as in a film run backwards, a retrospect of the life just ended, an experience survivors of a near-death event have frequently reported. While this is happening or else at a second encounter (here there is no unanimity) the observer is made to experience the impact, good or bad, his past behaviour had on others. For Mme. Blavatsky, with her penchant for things oriental, it was a glimpse of the ‘karma’ accrued in the lifetime just completed, referred to by her and

by others, notably Rudolf Steiner, as an encounter with the Dweller on the Threshold. Known also as Guardian of the Threshold, this formidable entity (or at least the name it goes by) was the invention of Edward Bulwer Lytton in his novel *Zanoni* (1842), a book that influenced many well-known occultists, some less keen than others to admit it.

Eventually the delights of the Hereafter, like their earthly counterparts, begin of course to cloy. By then the time has come for the self to shed the identity of its most recent incarnation and resume its evolutionary progress, either by returning to Earth to start a new life or by proceeding, now discarnate, onwards and upwards. The precise mechanics remain a mystery, and rightly so. The most we can suppose is that the 'I' or quintessential self, survivor of countless incarnations, either gravitates back to Earth, or if it has no further business there, begins its ascent towards the fountainhead. About this second possibility we are not equipped to speculate.

Clearly, the earthly return of the individual, the kernel of several personalities, supposes a series of incarnations stretching behind each of us. Such former lives are for the most part unremembered, although occasionally a trivial incident may produce a fleeting recollection of something related to a previous incarnation. The memory chain can sometimes be reforged by a Hesedic rite in which, to quote one text, 'all that was past becomes present'. Even so, the difficulty about remembering previous lives is that the subconscious, given free rein, will set about inventing incarnations that flatter its lofty pretensions. This is why so many people claim to have formerly been Egyptian princesses, Chinese courtiers or Knights Templar, and why we never find among them an erstwhile street-sweeper, stevedore or fishwife.

Occultists have the advantage that when they die, they have an inkling of what to expect. Well, more than just an inkling as some will already have explored the lower astral in their ritual work or during astral projection. It is true that Spiritualists share this knowledge to some extent, but the occultist, because of his experience with thought-forms, better understands the laws that govern his new environment. He will not, for example, take at face value those spirit concert halls or the spirit cows chewing their cud in verdant spirit pastures. Not that he need forego the music or whatever else is on offer just because he knows, deep down, it is only as real as he makes it.

A similar understanding will assist him in this life as well. For his belief in reincarnation enables him to regard his trials and tribulations as part of an educative process by which his enduring selfhood is constantly being refined to become worthy of its supernal destiny. Many newcomers to occultism question the value of reincarnation, arguing that our inability to remember past lives robs it of purpose. Their view is that unless we know why we merit the afflictions that beset us, no benefit is gained from putting up with them. It is, they insist, no good attributing adverse conditions to karma when we have no idea how the original karmic debt was incurred. There may be something to be said for such a view but the idea of retribution for specific offences is not fundamental to belief in reincarnation. On the contrary it is a particular, in this case oriental, interpretation of what for others is a natural after-death occurrence. Uncertainty about the ethical implications compels no one to reject the phenomenon itself.

Among our European ancestors there prevailed a belief that consciousness could function outside the body, hence the expression ‘traveling souls’. Given that the soul might undertake this activity during sleep—terms like astral projection and lucid dreaming had yet to be invented—it was held to do the same when the body breathed its last. Its ambition, born of habit, would then be to gain rapid access to another body and thereby embark on a new incarnation. In some cultures any living thing would suffice for that purpose and as a result animals, even insects, were thought to harbour human souls. One Celtic tradition even maintained that transmigrating souls might find refuge in trees and plants, somewhat in the manner of Philemon and Baucis to whom Greek mythology attributed a similar fate.

That said, the Hellenic view generally was that human souls occupied human bodies. Known as metempsychosis—the term favoured by Schopenhauer—it was a central tenet of Orphism, as well as taught by Pythagoras, and as Plato writes in his *Dialogues*, by Socrates as well. For Plato the soul's true home was what he called the realm of Forms, an unconditioned reality which transcends the conditioned reality (‘the realm of Substances’) we currently inhabit. Not surprisingly, given these antecedents, the notion was adopted by the Neo-Platonists and by the various Gnostic movements, Manichaeism being the most enduring, they then went on to foster.

By the eleventh century the Cathars were persecuted for holding similar beliefs, anathema to a Church committed to the view that human beings have but one earthly life, followed by eternal bliss or torment. More recently the notion has gained new converts in Europe and the West thanks to an interest in Buddhism and other oriental teachings where, as noted earlier, karma plays a central role. For some people, otherwise sympathetic to the notion of rebirth, the rigorous credit-and-debit approach implicit in the popular notion of karma can be off-putting. It is worth stressing therefore that the karmic element is an optional extra. If you find it too simplistic, even mechanistic, then forget about it. Instead keep in mind, as Plato recommended, that our present life, like others past and future, is an opportunity for continuing self-improvement, a mysterious but necessary part of human evolution.

And finally if, while you're at it, you discover the meaning of 'life, the universe and everything', then keep it to yourself. Each of us must find his or her own answer. The light, you will remember, is within us, not without.

¹ The word is used by, among others, Proclus in his *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*. Its meaning, the author reminds us is 'generative of soul'. Given that the astral body is the product of what Hegel called 'the experience of consciousness' the word seems appropriate.

² The phenomenon was examined by the English physicist and psychical researcher William F. Barrett in his *Death Bed Visions* (1926) and by Karlis Osis, either alone (*Deathbed Observations*, Parapsychology Foundation, New York, 1961) or in collaboration with Erlendur Haraldsson (*At the Hour of Death*, Hastings House / Daytrips Publishers, 3rd Revised edition, 2006.) It must be said that many scientists remain sceptical, arguing that the cases reported can be explained by a depleted or briefly interrupted supply of oxygen to the brain, a condition known as cerebral hypoxia. For a critical assessment see *Pseudoscience and the Paranormal* by Terence Hines (Prometheus, Amherst, new ed. 2003).

³ To complete the picture it should be mentioned that the Egyptians also credited man with a spiritual body or *sadhu*, possibly the equivalent of the 'consciousness' discussed earlier, being that part of him which acquires the self knowledge rendering him immortal. In the *Book of the Dead* a deceased person is said to 'look upon his body and rest upon his *sadhu*', while souls are further reported to 'enter into their *sadhu*'. However, a more likely candidate for the role of consciousness is the Egyptian *ba*, a word meaning 'sublime' or 'noble'. The *ba* was incorporeal and dwelt within either the physical body or its *ka*, both frequently depicted as a human-headed bird. This multiplicity of names is confusing, but indicative of an attempt to describe satisfactorily the astral body and the consciousness that both creates it and sustains it after death. Few nowadays accept unreservedly the classification offered by Sir A. E. Wallis Budge in his pioneering edition of *The Book of the Dead* (1895) but it probably remains as good as any other. There, the terms listed are: *saku*/soul or spirit body; *ka*/double; *khaibit*/shadow; *khu*/intelligence; *sekhem*/form. Finally it should be noted that of the subtle bodies or *koshas* acknowledged in Hindu and Buddhist tradition, *mayavirupa* is the astral vehicle born of self-awareness and another, the *linga sharira*, is the one that accompanies us from

birth. Tibetan Lamaism often refers to the former, sometimes to both, as the 'rainbow body', though that term refers primarily to a state of enlightenment..

[4](#) Nowhere is this more striking than in communications purportedly received by Sir Oliver Lodge from his son Raymond, a Second Lieutenant killed on the Western Front in 1915. Published a year later, the book *Raymond or Life After Death*, was a runaway success on both sides of the Atlantic. Through a medium named Mrs. Gladys Osborne Leonard, Raymond cheerfully assures his father that those running things over there can provide him and his friends with 'everything that is wanted . . . some want meat and some strong drink: they call for whisky and sodas. Don't think I'm stretching it when I tell you they can manufacture even that.' Heaven, it would seem, is a well-run Officers' Mess. And the drinks are on the house.

THE WAY OF HIGH MAGIC

It would also be foolish to despise low magic, as some people do, on the grounds that it encourages a preoccupation with oneself and one's immediate needs. It does not. In any case other things in life, none remotely magical, do precisely that and do it more effectively. On top of which low magic is worthwhile because it provides everyone, even those aspiring to the higher sort, with invaluable training. Anyone stepping onto the magical path, however low-lying, will quickly realise how far ahead it stretches, and having glimpsed, nay experienced, the marvels on offer will be impatient to go farther. That said, the path towards the summit starts among the foothills so in this final chapter we shall take a peep, no more, at what you might expect there.

One of the first things you will discover is that few eminent occultists accept that human beings, like their cousins the apes, are descended from a primitive variety of orang-outang, *Pierolapithecus catalaunicus* being the candidate of choice. (Madame Blavatsky showed her contempt for Darwin by exhibiting in her New York apartment a stuffed baboon, nattily dressed and carrying under its arm a copy of the *Origin of Species*.) Popular among occult writers is the notion that our earliest forebears inhabited the astral world, endowed with an intuitive understanding of the mysteries surrounding them, but unlike the angels with whom they consorted, were equipped with free will. It was the latter that prompted them at some point to question the way God went about his business, a piece of chutzpah that secured their immediate demotion to the world of dense matter. Madame Blavatsky fastidiously called this 'a fixed ultimate of debasement'. According to her, the debasement would endure until 'man adjusts his outer terrestrial to his inner divine nature', though she reluctantly conceded that 'the animal will be tamed one day.'

That, at least, is how the story goes. Oddly enough, their distaste for the world does not inhibit these writers from looking back to a golden age when it was a younger and far happier place. This, they maintain, was a time when wise teachers, emissaries from the upper astral, went about instructing mankind in the arts and sciences, their efforts so successful that civilization reached standards of technological advancement surpassing

anything we know today. Intergalactic travel was common in those halcyon times, bringing visitors from distant planets where, presumably, the inhabitants had reconciled their outer and inner natures to their Maker's satisfaction (or at least to that of Madame Blavatsky). According to reports, the Moon was quickly colonized but being a cold, inhospitable place proved less popular than our own milk-and-honey world.

But things came to an end with one almighty bang. (Well, a series of bangs, according to a minority view, with several millennia in between them.) For this some occultists blame a coterie of black magicians, magic being at the time both respectable and widely practised, while others point to a clique of ambitious scientists who abused the precious knowledge they had gained. Wherever the fault lay, the bang propelled the Moon, by then decolonized, into space and plunged an entire continent, the legendary Atlantis, to the bottom of the sea. During this or a subsequent catastrophe a portion of the earth detached itself to form our present moon, although there is no unanimity about the timing. Most concur, however, that the moon we have now is a late replacement.^{[1](#)}

Obviously not all the Earth's inhabitants perished in the cataclysm, though apart from a few saintly beings, Masters of the Great White Lodge, most of the superhuman teachers packed their bags and left. Over time the beautiful buildings crumbled, works of art were destroyed and saddest of all, books containing great wisdom slowly turned to dust.^{[2](#)} Civilisation thereupon regressed to a more primitive level and it is to historians we must turn to see how it has struggled since then to recover a little of its pristine glory.

What truth is there in this? By way of evidence, its defenders point, *inter alia*, to certain Mayan relics, the terraces of Baalbek, Aztec symbolism, the Nazca Lines of Peru and, less often nowadays, those mysterious stone figures found on Easter Island. It used also to be said that shortly after dispatching his final message in 1925, the explorer Percy Fawcett stumbled across survivors of this lost civilization in the depths of the Amazon forest. Compelled to see out his days among them, he is alleged to have recounted his experiences through several mediums, explaining *inter alia* how his hosts made practical use of thought-energy a thousand times more powerful than anything known to modern science.^{[3](#)}

Before dismissing out of hand the evidence marshalled in support of the occultist view, we should acknowledge perhaps that many archaeological discoveries do raise questions that remain unanswered. Those Easter Island figures, for example, weigh up to 50 tons each, yet despite umpteen theories, none convincingly explains how they were conveyed to their present location from the volcanic crater of Rano-Raraku. And let's not begin speculating on how the great standing stones of Stonehenge got there from Preseli in South Wales, especially as the standard explanation—that they were floated down the Severn 4000 years ago—has recently been discredited. (The latest suggestion is that they were carried there by, er, glaciers.⁴) Then there was the discovery of objects made of aluminum-based alloys in an ancient burial mound at Kouang-Sou in eastern China, mainly belt buckles belonging to a general of the Tsin dynasty (313–250 BC). These were fashioned from an alloy of copper and aluminum which metallurgists would take 2000 years to imitate. Needless to say, such examples fall well short of proving that an antediluvian Golden Age flourished on our planet, but they do encourage its supporters to claim that the case is unproven.

The same can be said of Atlantis itself.⁵ We noted earlier that lost lands are a subject of enduring interest to occultists. They speculate endlessly about the achievements and social *mores* of such places as Mu, Lemuria and Shambhala,⁶ though nothing intrigues them more than Atlantis, centre of all that was marvelous in the ancient world. While reconciled to the idea that Atlantis itself is forever lost beneath the waves, many boast of a telepathic rapport with its former inhabitants or else claim to revisit its Akashic likeness. Rudolf Steiner was a regular visitor, as were both Dion Fortune (who got into the habit as a small child) and her *de facto* successor at the Society of the Inner Light, Margaret Lumley Brown. In my teens I came across a group devoted to the teachings of a certain Helio-Arcanophus, once a leading light in Atlantean society. Familiarly known as H-A, he continued to dispense wisdom right up until 2011 when elbowed out by a newcomer named Allbeing, said to be more refined than his predecessor, as well as genderless.

Meanwhile those not granted direct access to the great and the good of antediluvian society make do with the memory of previous incarnations spent on the lost continent, its popularity in this respect rivalling that of ancient Egypt. Indeed, you will find that any esoteric teaching that cannot

be given a credible pedigree is routinely attributed to Atlantis. After all, apart from Helio-Arcanophus and a few others, there is no one around to challenge it. At some point therefore every newcomer to magic must ask himself what there is to the legend outside the romantic imagination of so many occult writers.

The name Atlantis, invented by a historian named Hellanicus, is mentioned by Plato in two of his works, *Timaeus* and *Critias*. There, he claims to report conversations which Socrates had in 421 BC with *Timaeus*, a Pythagorean philosopher, and *Critias*, believed to be Plato's uncle. Invited by Socrates to provide an historical example of the ideal state, Critias starts describing how his grandfather, another Critias, inherited an account of Atlantis written by the Athenian lawgiver Solon (690–558 BC). The story ('strange but true') had come to Solon's attention during a trip to Sais in Egypt where he invited a priest to translate the hieroglyphic script on a column inside the temple of the goddess Neith. This told of an island kingdom in the Atlantic Ocean ('beyond the Pillars of Hercules'), larger than Libya and Asia minor combined, which had flourished some 9000 years earlier, its armies having at one point conquered much of the Mediterranean seaboard. (Plato is quick to add that Athens alone had fended them off.) The Atlanteans are nevertheless described as a cultured, sophisticated people and in *Critias* Plato is at pains to describe the ideal society they developed.

Whether Plato believed in the historical truth of all this is unclear, though years later Crantor (whose teacher, Xenocrates, was one of Plato's pupils) would insist he did, a claim Proclus and other Neoplatonists would make much of. A few centuries later Arabian cartographers began marking the presumed location of Atlantis on their maps and the legend survived intact well into the Renaissance, defying attempts to rationalize it by, for example, identifying it with the Americas, Scandinavia, and a big favourite, the Balearic Islands. French humanists, among them Michel de Montaigne, were inclined to accept the truth of the story, with the factual existence of Plato's Island vouched for in the eighteenth century by no less a sceptic than Voltaire. Having survived that long, it is not surprising the credibility of Atlantis is still debated today. At last count there have been 20,000 books on the subject.

Of these the more recent tend to be sceptical, though not entirely dismissive. Several identify Atlantis with the Minoan civilization that

flourished on Crete until, so the argument goes, a volcanic eruption on Thera, fewer than seventy miles away, created a tidal wave that devastated much of the island.⁷ Persuasive evidence, both archaeological and geophysical, has been adduced in support of this theory, but it does nothing to explain why Plato located Atlantis well to the west and far beyond the Straits of Gibraltar.

More plausible is the suggestion that long before the historical record began, there was indeed a country which became the Atlantis of folk memory. There may have even been several such places, for in many cultures there are legends about the disappearance of islands, promontories and coastal cities. The original Atlantis, whatever name it went by, may even have reached a comparatively high level of technological advancement, possibly because its climate and topography encouraged its inhabitants, rid of the struggle to survive, to devote themselves to science and the arts, earning the esteem of their more backward neighbors. The exact fate of this country, if it existed, will never be known, but the memory of its achievements might have survived.

That said, formidable arguments can be made against even so cautious a view. For one thing there is the curious absence of any record of Atlantis until the time of Plato. Striking, too, is the failure of the Egyptian priests who narrated the story to Solon to comment on the disaster that befell the island. It seems odd that such an event should fade into oblivion while the memory of the place itself endured. There is also the fact that history affords neither the time nor cultural gap to accommodate a lost civilization of such importance. Seemingly the most damning of all, however, was the discovery in 1912 by the geophysicist, Alfred Wegener, that the continents of America, Europe, Africa and Asia were once a single entity—he named it Pangaea—which then splintered about 200 million years ago, causing its constituent pieces to drift apart. The portion travelling westwards became North and South America, leaving Europe and Africa in its wake, with only the Atlantic Ocean, nothing else, in between.

And that would seem to make the case against Atlantis irrefutable. Except that if one reassembles the parts of Wegener's Pangaea, pushing the dispersed continents together again, some bits are conspicuously absent. True, South America and the west coast of Africa nestle cosily together but farther north the pieces refuse to interlock so neatly. (There is an even bigger gap on the other side of Africa where Lemuria purportedly existed.)

These gaps remain even when allowance is made for the inevitable fragmentation that occurred along the edges of the severed continents as they became detached. Such gaps do not of course imply Atlantis ever existed. What they show is that Continental Drift, as the phenomenon is called, does not prove it did not. At the end of the day the real explanation of Atlantis may lie in human psychology: people, including perhaps Plato, have wanted to believe in it. Many still do. Thus, whatever its historical validity, it has by now secured for itself a quasi-archetypal existence. And there is no knocking that!

With the verdict still open let us turn next to the post-Atlantean world and its inhabitants, as depicted in esoteric literature. Today most students of occultism would regard themselves as a pretty liberal bunch, doubtless with good reason. By contrast many stalwarts of the magical revival that began around the end of the nineteenth century, were not. Racial differences feature prominently in their writing, some of it an unapologetic defence of white, specifically Aryan, virtues.⁸ Only recently have things changed, with such theorizing confined now to post-Atlantean humanity and the ethnic diversification that followed when a 'root race' of nine thousand survivors became the progenitors of the various ethnic groups currently inhabiting our planet.

The term 'root-race' is confusing. Human prototype might be better. What many occult writers suggest, taking their cue (as so often) from Madame Blavatsky, is that each epoch, and more specifically the root race peculiar to it, has its own archetypal principle or Manu. In Hinduism Vaivasvata is Manu of the current aeon, though in the West other names are plentiful, with several authors claiming the memory of such figures lingers on in folklore, Merlin being a favourite example, along with Odin and Osiris. In her book *Applied Magic* Dion Fortune lists a few of the better-known Manus:

Some claim that Rama was the Manu of the Aryan race.

Melchizedek was the Manu of the Chaldean and early Semitic races in addition to his Atlantean connection.

Narada was the manu of the First Atlantean Race.

Asuramaya was a Manu of an earlier Lemurian Race which had mingled with early Atlantean and he 'lived' in Atlantis in these earliest days. He was the 'teacher of the starry wisdom' to the

antediluvian world even as was Melchizedek to the post-diluvian, and was the first astronomer. In Atlantis he worked with and under Narada. Euclid—who is a Lord of one of the Wisdom aspects of the Western Tradition—was not only a great human teacher but also had on the Inner Planes an aspect manifesting a direct ‘beam’ from Asuramaya (somewhat analogous, but less in degree and origin, to the manifesting of the Christ by the Lord Jesus), which was more than an ‘overshadowing’⁹

While the principal task of the Manu is to guide the human race along a pre-ordained path, he is assisted by guardian angels comparable to the Rishis of post-Vedic Hinduism, whose task is to watch over the archetypal idea which particular races represent. This archetype, is the original preconceived racial pattern, and its angelic custodians are sometimes referred to as ‘personalised principles of Archetypal Fire’, their task being ensure their ethnic protégés settle in the territory assigned to them, establishing themselves as one nation or several. An angel of this sort is believed to have watched over the Jewish people as they journeyed under Abraham's leadership from Ur to Canaan and again when they were led out of Egypt by Moses. It is further claimed that as long as each nation remains true to form, its archetypal consciousness stays attuned to the mind of its angelic guardian, but the latter absconds once deviance and decay set in, transferring its stewardship to another more deserving of its patronage.

The difficulty is that ‘race’ is no longer a term ethnologists are overfond of. They would shudder for instance at the way some occultists speak of the Celtic ‘race’, since according to them the Celts were a group of tribal societies that happened to share a common language and culture. But let us set aside the niceties of ethnology and consider the evidence. This indicates that just as there are physical and mental differences among individuals, so there are differences among groups of people which, for want of a better word, we call races. To admit it is not to assert that one race is inherently superior to another, something Madame Blavatsky was careful to point out, but merely to suggest that geographical and environmental factors help determine group as well as individual characteristics. Thanks to these, certain races develop particular skills and aptitudes. That is why occultists frequently refer to the ‘green Ray’ of the Celtic race, indicative of a strong romantic streak that manifests itself in

music and poetry. To this extent many generalisations about race, though as fallible as any other kind, are borne out by reality.

From here it is not too difficult to suppose that if an intelligent motivation underlies every evolutionary process, then the development of the human race is no exception. Indeed, in magic an 'angelic' agency, a sort of guiding principle, is held to collaborate in the evolution of every species on the planet. Racial angels can thus be regarded as agencies of this type, commissioned to guide members of a particular race towards a collective destiny. Guardians of a racial archetype, they personify that ethnic oversoul which so fascinated Jung and his disciples. To make sense of them, simply regard them as an expression of that transpersonal layer of yourself which is attuned to—nay, is part of—the Collective Unconscious. Within it dwell archetypes common to us all and magic renders them accessible to those who practise it.

Such, then, in brief is what lies behind the root races, lost civilizations, Manus and the other exotic flora you will come across as you ascend towards the uplands of Magic. There is no need to take any of them at their face value. As Jung again said, 'all esoteric teachings endeavour to apprehend the unseen happenings in the psyche...They contain a revealed knowledge that was originally hidden, and by means of it they set forth the secrets of the soul in glorious images.'¹⁰ You should not even take all that's written in this book at face value either.

One final topic merits our attention, as you are bound to come across it sooner or later. Indeed I alluded to it in the Introduction. This is the belief that history can be divided into units of time, each coinciding with a phase of mankind's evolution, the whole sequence determined by a celestial phenomenon known as the Platonic Year. Equivalent of 25,868 calendar years, the first in the West to observe it may have been a Chaldean astronomer named Kidenas (4th Century BC), though the Greek mathematician Hipparchus, born around 200 BC is generally credited with its discovery. What one or both observed is that the Spring equinox is not permanently fixed in Aries, first sign of the zodiac, but moves slowly backwards through all twelve constellations at the rate of one sign every 2,000 or so years. The suggestion is that the attributes of each sign then determine the religious, social and cultural bias of society throughout that period. Currently we are on the threshold—and according to some may already have crossed it—of the Aquarian Age, having just left the Piscean

behind. Similar notions exist in Hinduism. There the Great Year, composed of 24,000 years, is divided into a number of ‘yugas’, all of variable length, with Kali Yuga (499–1699 AD) about to yield to its successor, Dwapara, its characteristics similar to those of the Aquarian Age.^{[11](#)}

Much nonsense has been written about the Aquarian Age, often by those with a vested interest in its arrival. Most agree, however, that we are currently witnessing the demise of the sorrowful, sin-obsessed aeon of Pisces and its gradual replacement by the joyful humanism of its Aquarian successor, sometimes referred to as the Era of Horus. This, of course, fits in well with contemporary liberal trends, although extremism, particularly of a religious sort, is a concomitant of it, given that action and reaction are complementary forces.

While details of the Aquarian renewal can be left to social historians to catalogue at some future date, conspicuous among them has been a resurgence of interest in occultism. In part this is a reaction against the pervasiveness of technology throughout our modern world, as well as a reluctance to accept science as the final arbiter on such matters as life, death, love and beauty. People turn to occultism, not because it is anti-rational as its opponents maintain, but because it alone can *demonstrate* there is more to things, ourselves included, than science or even organised religion has hitherto conceded.

Above all occultism is ceasing to be ‘esoteric’ in the sense of ‘private’ or ‘exclusive’. Of course it remains true that only a minority choose to investigate its mysteries, but such people are no longer confined to specialist groups and organisations like Spiritualists, Theosophists, Anthroposophists and a myriad other ‘-ists’ and ‘-isms’. Instead, beginning in the nineteen-sixties and coinciding with hippydom and Flower Power, there emerged an upsurge of interest in the supernatural, matched by a desire, at times naive, to make it part of everyday life. As the anthem from *Hair* proclaimed, it was a time of—

*Harmony and understanding,—
Sympathy and trust abounding,
No more falsehoods or derisions,
Golden living dreams of visions,
Mystic crystal revelations
And the mind's true liberation.*

Suddenly young people everywhere—and with my flares, flowered shirts and patchouli, the teenage me among them—were craving to understand more about life and themselves than they had hitherto been taught. By recourse to sex, drugs, music, meditation, even dubious varieties of mushroom, they sought to induce states of consciousness that might discern the transcendental behind the world of form.

These young people had no common philosophy. They merely sensed there was more to life than the utilitarian goals on which society was focussed. Many chose to ‘drop out’ of society altogether, while others, wiser perhaps, endeavoured to see if they could work out a more satisfactory alternative. Knowing that they and all else were fundamentally one, they strove to impart this message by their own, not always successful, example of peace and love and service.

It would be an exaggeration to label them occultists. That said, there followed a renewed interest in occultism, particularly, I remember, in witchcraft, first in the folklorish version propagated since the nineteen-fifties by Gerald Gardner, and then from the start of the ‘seventies, the more savvy alternative offered by newcomer Alex Sanders and, indispensably, his wife Maxine. Even Aleister Crowley, his face among those on the cover of the Sgt. Pepper album (1967), began to enjoy a popularity denied him in his lifetime. Dion Fortune never quite caught on, partly because of squabbles within the Society of the Inner Light she had founded, while attempts to revive the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn likewise came to nothing. More successful a few years later was Chaos Magic, the invention of several young Turks who sought to reinvent magic by shedding, not before time, some of the impedimenta that encumbered it. By then, too, various forms of Paganism, from latter day Druidism to Odinism was fast gaining ground and today continues to win converts. All of these, regardless of label, bear witness to the new Aquarian zeitgeist. That said, more numerous still are those who, drawn to the same intangible reality but denied the right passwords, find access to it blocked. One of my aims in writing this book was to demonstrate how magic can help them, sons and daughters of Aquarius like the rest of us, rediscover that enchanted place for which they too yearn like homesick children.

And here we come to the end of our introduction to magic. Or, as magicians would say when their work is completed, *Tetelestai*, it is over. In these pages I have tried to show that magical belief is perfectly reasonable

and not some curious aberration affecting certain people. Nor is it a form of escape, as Freud maintained.¹² On the contrary it seeks, not to avoid the real world, but to know it better. If I were to sum up the aim of magic, I would describe it as a search for that ultimate reality of which form is but the outward appearance. This, of course, is also the aim of mysticism. But the mystic differs from the magician in that for him the visible world conceals the reality he is seeking and for that reason must be transcended, even shunned. The magician, however, knows that matter merely reflects reality so that by studying its manifested form he will eventually discover its unmanifested essence.

Not all those who practice magic are aware of these things to begin with. Often their ambitions are immediate and severely practical. Given time, however, the significance of the results obtained by ritual will strike all but the most myopic practitioner. Without expecting it, he will suddenly find he has been brought face to face with the one tremendous secret that will transform his life. At once he will begin to wonder why he never noticed it before, forgetting that the nearness of a miracle may blind us to its presence.

For the successful occultist, therefore, magic becomes a way of life and not a substitute for it. To him belongs the deep satisfaction derived from identifying himself with the macrocosm of which he is a tiny part. By attuning his mind to the universal forces around him, he is able to expand his consciousness until everything is contained within himself. This he does by inducing supernormal states of consciousness which enable him to contact forms of existence not usually part of our human experience. Hence his use of symbolism, since it is the means by which concepts normally impossible to define or comprehend are rendered accessible to the conscious mind. At the same time those symbols awaken in his subconscious the intuitive knowledge already stored there as part of his human inheritance. One with the universe, he gathers up into the present all that was and will be, discovering a magical self-fulfillment in which he can both lose and find himself. His end, therefore, is but a beginning.

May it be the same with this book.

τετελεσται ἀλλά μόνον ἄρχει

1 Many experts believe the moon detached itself from the earth some 4.5 billion years ago, following a collision between the proto-earth and a hypothetical planet they have called Theia, a Titaness in Greek mythology who was herself a moon goddess.

2 Not all perhaps. Madame Blavatsky claimed to have been shown some of these ancient texts when visiting Tibet, one of them, the Book of Dzyan, being the basis for her magnum opus *The Secret Doctrine*. This same book, we are assured by Erich von Däniken is older than the planet itself (see *Gods from Outer Space*, Bantam, New York, 1972, p.136).

3 Some years ago there were reports of submerged terraces, possibly man-made, off the coast of the Bahamas. Known as the Bimini Wall, news of their discovery caused a flutter among occultists, especially when a member of the team, Dr. Manson Valentine, pointed to a similarity with megalithic monuments in Europe and linked them to Atlantis. (The American clairvoyant, Edward Cayce—familiar with Atlantis thanks to his access to the Akashic Record—had by then predicted the re-emergence in this area of Poseida, an island off the coast of the lost continent.) While nothing certain is known about the nature of the structures, most experts consider them to be a natural geological feature. Dr. Valentine, a believer also in UFO's, later collaborated with Charles Berlitz, author of the best-selling book, *The Bermuda Triangle* (1974).

4 cf. Maurice Barbanell, *Modern Spiritualism*, Herbert Jenkins, London, 1959, p. 52: 'the knowledge [he] has gained is astonishing. Men would give kingdoms to have it.' (A spirit guide is speaking.) Over the years many explanations, from the banal to the bizarre, have been offered to account for Fawcett's disappearance.

5 See *Journal of Archaeological Science*, Volume 39, Issue 4, April 2012, pp 1005-1019.

6 These are but three of the several lost lands that feature in esoteric literature. Mu was the name given by Augustus Le Plongeon (1825-1908), if not to Atlantis then to somewhere very much like it. Mr. Le Plongeon had by his own account come across a reference to it on some Mayan ruins in Yucatan. Later James Churchward would take up the notion but relocate Mu to the Pacific, alleging that it once extended from Hawaii to Easter Island. Formerly home to 64 million people it was, he suggested, the original Garden of Eden. (His book, *The Lost Continent of Mu: Motherland of Man* was published in 1926.) Prior to Mu there had been Lemuria, another hypothetical continent in (or by now *under*) the Pacific, its existence originally proposed in order to account for the prevalence of related mammal species in, for example, India and Madagascar. (By now our understanding of genetics has removed the need for any such hypothesis.) The notion was taken up by Madame Blavatsky who claimed that Lemuria had been home to the Third Root Race, seven to eight feet tall, hermaphroditic and spiritually pure. Rudolf Steiner, after delving into the Akashic Record, declared that Lemurians were not hermaphroditic after all but were indeed spiritually enlightened, for they "gazed into the creative laboratory of Nature. What they experienced there was intercourse with the Beings who work at the building of the world itself." So busy were they at their intercourse, that they appear not to have foreseen the conflagration that would destroy their homeland, finally plunging it to the bottom of the sea. Happily a few Lemurians managed to get out in time. Of these some found refuge on or, rather, inside Mount Shasta in California, where they or, presumably, their descendants can still occasionally be spotted. As for Shambhala, according to Hindu and Tibetan tradition this was a kingdom somewhere north of India, its inhabitants again famous for their spirituality. Heinrich Himmler is reported to have shown an interest in the place, even sponsoring expeditions to its putative location, his ambition being to locate the *fons et origo* of the Aryan race

7 It has been suggested that the same event was responsible for the catastrophes visited upon Egypt at the time of Moses, as well as the parting of the Red Sea, natural events that were subsequently presented as miracles in the Book of Exodus. Seductive though such arguments are, there remain chronological inconsistencies that have yet to be addressed.

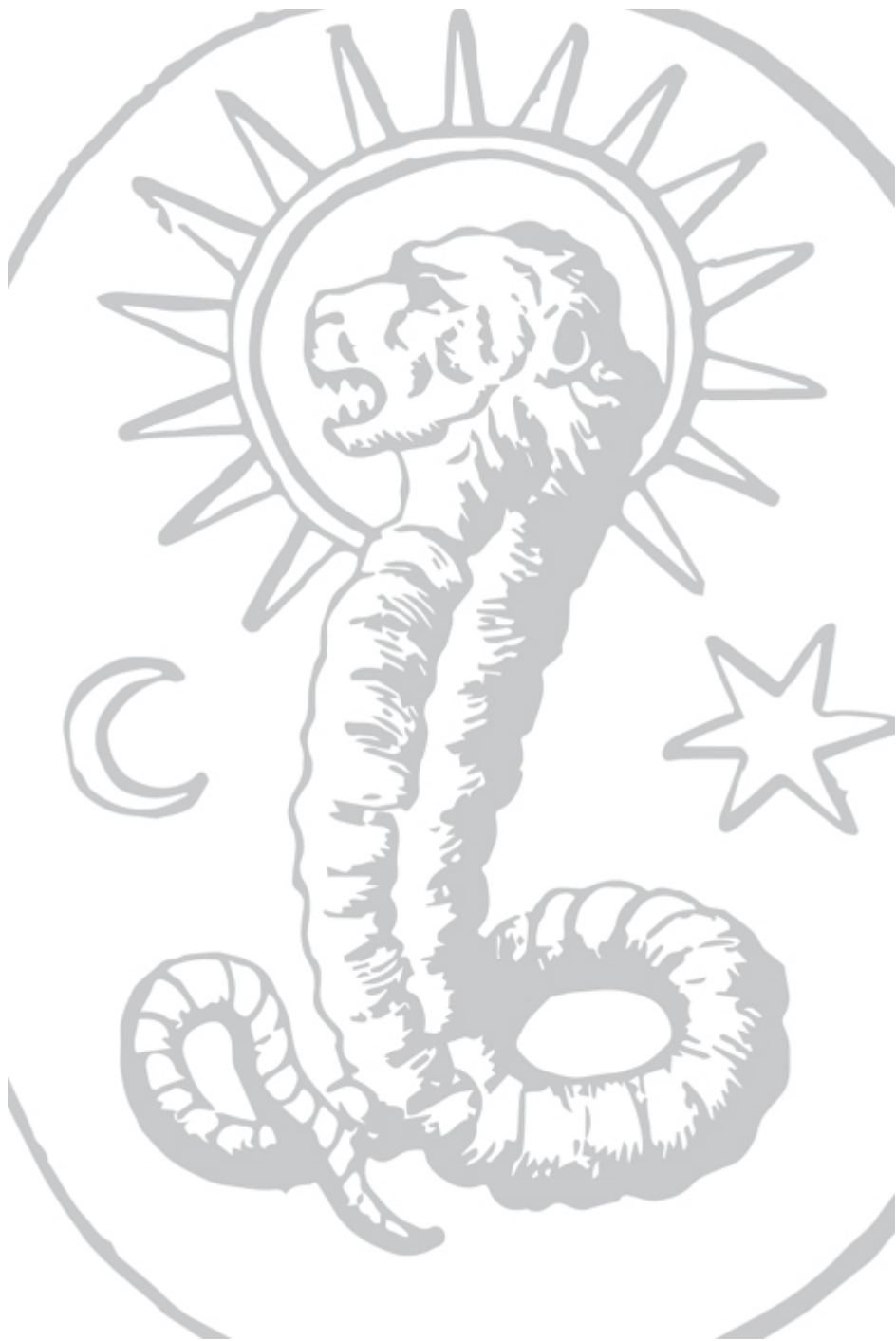
[8](#) E.g. Dion Fortune, *Applied Magic*, Aquarian, London, 1962, p. 85: 'The White Race contains not only the most evolved – the Aryan – but also the Semites.....Owing to certain Atlantean errors, the Jewish section of the Race have brought the Archetype to the West without themselves being fitted to use it. This is the "Curse of the Jews" and dates from long before the birth of Jesus.' Similarly Rudolf Steiner: 'as anyone who deals with Jews knows...mistrust of non-Jews has fully taken over their souls...I consider anti-semites to be harmless people.' Die Sehnsucht der Juden nach Palästina in *Magazin für Literatur*, vol. 66 no. 38, 1897. Elsewhere Steiner writes: 'On the one side we find the black race, which is the most earthly. If it moves to the West, it becomes extinct. We also have the yellow race, which is in the middle between earth and cosmos. If it moves to the East, it becomes brown, becomes too attached to the cosmos and soon afterwards extinct. The white race is the future, the one race that is spiritually creative.' (*Vom Leben des Menschen und der Erde und das Wesen des Christentums*, p. 62).

[9](#) Dion Fortune, *Applied Magic*, Aquarian Press, London, 1962, pp. 85-6

[10](#) C.G.Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Routledge, London, 1959, p. 7.

[11](#) composed of 308 million years, and is the responsibility of a specific Manu, assisted by a number of rishis. Successive Manvantaras combine to form a kalpa or Day of Brahma, a period of 8.64 trillion years, during which the universe functions in a state of 'manifestation'. At the end of this period it lapses into a period of non-manifestation, sometimes called a 'Night' or 'Sleep of Brahma', before awakening to a new period of manifestation (or kalpa).

[12](#) In his *Psychoanalysis and Telepathy* (1921) Freud contends that an interest in occultism is due to a need to compensate for feelings of personal inadequacy originating in childhood.



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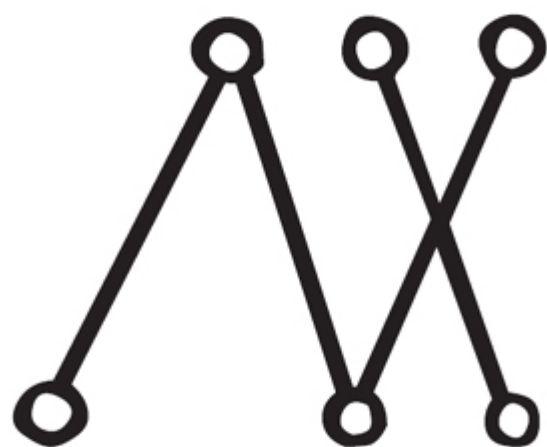
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Appendix 3

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APPENDIX I: MAGICAL RECIPES

I discovered herbs before I learned about Magic—or so it seemed at the time. Later I found out that both were connected. I must have been about fourteen, my teacher an elderly farmer who lived on his own among the bleak and barren hills of central Wales. His family had dwelt there for hundreds, if not thousands of years, descended from shadowy figures who, before history began, came there to worship long-forgotten gods and build stone monuments to honour them. Among these was a cairn high above the path leading to the farm. Known locally as *Clogwyn Bedwyr* or Bedwyr's Rock, it owed its name to one of King Arthur's knights, handsomest of them all according to tradition. It was he that returned Excalibur to the Lady of the Lake.

This is a bleak, inhospitable place, its rocks older than the Alps, perhaps even older than the Andes and the Himalayas, but without any of their ostentatious grandeur. Here the hills dip and clamber restlessly, not soar with single-minded purpose towards an apathetic sky. Instead the sky reaches down to them, grey and conspiratorial, so that on all but the sunniest of days their peaks are smothered in cloud. Home to undulating slopes, peat bogs and tightly folded valleys, it is a place of eerie stillness, though a stillness neither empty nor silent, at least not to those who have remembered how to listen.

And it was here I learned why herbs are part and parcel of magic, not just those that promote health or cure disease but others supposedly endowed with subtler virtues. There is enchantment in both. The plants listed below are the proof of it.

A few tips before we get started.

Most writers recommend that the herbs one uses should be freshly harvested. Fine, if you have the opportunity. The truth is that dried herbs, your own or those purchased from a reputable source, are probably just as effective. If you do collect your own, endeavour to do so while the Moon is waning, preferably in spring or early summer and in the morning. (This contrasts with traditional witchcraft where a dark or waning moon is favoured for destructive operations and, in parts of Wales and Scotland, more specifically for getting rid of pests.)

Herbs can be dried by hanging them in bunches in a well-ventilated room or spreading them out on shelves where they can be turned at regular intervals. In a cold climate the drying process may be accelerated by placing the herbs in a warm oven. When ready, they can be used in any of the following ways:

I. INFUSIONS

These are prepared by putting fresh or dried herbs in a pan of cold water (usually three handfuls of fresh/one ounce of dried to two cups of water) and heating it slowly, almost to boiling-point. The mixture is then allowed to simmer gently for a further three to five minutes before being removed from the heat and left to stand overnight. If stored in a cool place it will keep for up to four days, longer if intended for external use.

II. TINCTURES

The preparation of tinctures is equally simple. In general, the combination is one part of herbs to five parts of liquid (one part water/four parts ethyl alcohol or, if you prefer, apple cider vinegar). The mixture is stored in an airtight bottle for a week, preferably away from direct sunlight, and the bottle shaken, not too vigorously, several times a day. The tincture then will be ready for use.

III. OILS

Here a handful of herbs is crushed to a powder and placed in a half-pint bottle three-quarters filled with fine oil and half a teaspoonful of spirit vinegar. The tightly corked bottle should be placed in warm sunlight and shaken daily. Alternatively, the mixture may be warmed gently for an hour or so each day by placing the bottle in a bowl of water which is then heated gently. The whole process may take up to three weeks. A fortified version can be prepared by straining off the oil every fourth day and adding it to a fresh supply of herbs.

IV. SALVES

In this case the newly ground herbs are pounded into a fatty base such as bland cold-cream. The combination is usually one tablespoonful of herbs to three ounces of cream. Another traditional method is to add the herbs to semi-liquefied lard which is then heated for a further fifteen

minutes before being strained off into a suitable container and then left to cool and harden.

Herbal oils and creams were frequently mentioned in the witch trials of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it being alleged that they rendered the accused invisible, immune to pain and able to fly through the air, presumably en route to a Sabbat. If the victims ever believed such things, then self-delusion was probably to blame, especially as many popular salves contained belladonna or opium, both likely to promote hallucinations. Such concoctions were described by Wierus in his *De praestigiis daemonum, et incantationibus ac veneficiis*, liber IV (Basel, 1563). The Witches Ointment below is partly based on his writing.

All the recipes that follow come with a health warning, even those that supposedly promote better health. If you are allergic or have a medical condition that might be exacerbated by using any of the plants listed, seek specialist advice before you begin, a recommendation to be heeded also by pregnant women and nursing mothers. Remember too that oils and salves intended for external use may be absorbed through the skin. They may also cause an allergic reaction so be cautious and do a spot check first. As common sense suggests, keep well away from eyes and mucous membranes.

1. OILS AND SALVES

(i) Oleum Magicum no. 1

This is an all-purpose unguent of proven efficacy and a cherished accessory to magical work. It may be prepared in a liquid (oily) or solid (cold-cream) base. Do not despair if some of the ingredients are hard to come by, just make do with whatever you can get. Should you wish to improve the scent, add a few drops of Lily of the Valley (oil or essence: both obtainable from suppliers). By way of bonus its leaves and flowers are popularly credited with occult properties. It is also said to be a pheromonal stimulant.

Lycopodium clavatum (devil's claw)

Clematis vitalba (travellers joy)

Convolvulus arvensis (bindweed)

Sambucus nigra (elder)

Artemisia absinthium (wormwood)

Atropa belladonna (deadly nightshade: leaves and/or berries)

The plants called ramping fumitory (*Fumaria muralis*) and red spur-valerian (*Centranthus ruber*) may be used as an alternative to any of these ingredients, with henbane or nightshade (*Hyoscyamus niger*) a satisfactory alternative to either of the last two. Traditionally, Traveller's Joy (*Clematis vitalba*) and bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) are recommended additives for open-air work. By all accounts they will, if combined with laurel leaf (*Laurus nobilis*), assure you of good weather. Missing from the list, because of its reputation, is the traditional *Conium maculatum* (poison hemlock), source of the poison drunk by Socrates.

(ii) Oleum magicum no. 2

The second of these general-purpose oils is favoured when dealing with the elemental kingdom, its denizens tending to be boisterous on occasion. It may have a liquid or solid base. Its narcotic ingredients mean this oil requires caution both in its preparation and subsequent use. The recommended quantities should be carefully noted.

Potentilla (Cinquefoil) 6 gr.

Hyoscyamus niger (Henbane) 15 gr.

Cannabis indica or sativa (Indian hemp) 250 gr.

Oil of Wintergreen (Gaultheria)

According to some authorities the ingredients listed, often supplemented with 30 gr. of macerated betel leaf (*Piper betle*), should be added to a base of powdered sugar and gum tragacanth. The original recipe contained both Opium Extract (50 gr.), formerly obtainable from pharmacists but nowadays proscribed, and *Cantharides* (5 gr.), the notorious ‘Spanish fly’. Also traditionally included was *Atropa belladonna* (deadly nightshade/15 gr.), although its derivative, atropine, is used in medicine, its leaves and berries remain extremely toxic. (The juice of its berries was once favoured as an eye brightener, hence its name, despite causing blindness.) Be warned that henbane is poisonous, if ingested.

(iii) Oleum Angelorum (Oleum magicum no. 3)

As one text puts it ‘this salve is held to induce a languor of the spirit especially conducive to the perception of astral forms.’

Base: almond oil

Apium palustre (wild celery)

Aconitum lycoctonum (wolf’s-bane)

Betula lenta (sweet birch)

{ *Atropa belladonna* (deadly nightshade)
or
Hyoscyamus niger (henbane)

Betula lenta may be replaced by *Populus balsamifera*, the latter a native of North America where its resin is commercially available. It is often referred to as Balm of Gilead but the unguent so named in the Bible, a gift to Solomon from the Queen of Sheba (and incidentally, a favourite of Cleopatra), was probably derived from *Commiphora gileadensis*. Note that several of the plants listed are poisonous, especially wolf’s-bane (*Aconitum lycoctonum*), its root in particular, and given the risk of absorption through the skin is best avoided. *Hyoscyamus niger* or henbane is similarly poisonous if ingested.

Note that Wild Celery is the name sometimes given to an unrelated but poisonous plant, *Eleosinum*, better known as Mountain Parsley and mentioned in old recipes, as well as by Reginald Scot and Thomas Middleton (see 'Witches' Ointment', below).

(iv) Witches' Ointment

This recipe, derived from Wierus, was much favoured by mediaeval witches. It must be prepared 'on the day of Mercury and in his hour'. Another text adds that the Moon should be in one of the Air or Earth signs, preferably waxing. (The appropriate signs are Taurus, Gemini, Virgo, Libra, Capricorn, Aquarius).

Conium maculatum (poison hemlock)

Populus tremula (poplar: leaves and bark)

Sucus aconitis lycoctoni (juice of wolf's-bane)

Fuligo ligni (soot)

North American readers may, possibly to their advantage, replace *Populus tremula* with *Populus balsamifera* (see also *Oleum Angelorum* above).

Soot was a popular ingredient and is mentioned in Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), as well as in Thomas Middleton's play *The Witch*, written twenty years later. (Parts of this tragi-comedy would soon find their way into Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.) One possibility is that spread over face and body, soot assured the wearer of concealment in the dark. Today in homoeopathic dilution it is used to combat depression.

As said earlier, *Conium maculatum* is extremely poisonous. Its mention here is not an endorsement of its use.

(v) Abramelin Oil

Finally here is one of the best known of magical oils, largely because of its endorsement by MacGregor Mathers and Aleister Crowley. The original recipe appeared in *The Book of Abramelin the Mage*, thought to date from 1420 but possibly a good fifty years older. Seven manuscripts, the first from 1600, are known to us but Mathers based his translation (*Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, 1897) on a manuscript of 1750 held

in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris known to be unreliable as well as incomplete. (Absent from it is the fourth volume.) Mathers' recipe consists of:

4 parts pulverised cinnamon bark,
2 parts myrrh resin, finely ground,
1 part galangal, pulverised,

A base of olive oil but not exceeding half the total weight of the ingredients.

Closer to the original may well be the version offered by Georg Dehn and based on a concordance of all four German manuscripts. (His book is available in English, admirably translated by Steven Guth: *The Book of Abramelin: a new translation*, Ibis Press, Lake Worth, 2006). Here, the recipe is presented thus:

‘Take one part of the best myrrh, half a part of cinnamon, one part of cassia, one part galanga root, and a quarter of the combined total weight of good, fresh olive oil. Make these into an ointment or oil as is done by the chemists. Keep it in a clean container until you need it. Put the container together with the other accessories in the cupboard under the altar.’

It should be noted that the reference in the English text to ‘galangal’ is believed by some to be a mistranslation of the word *Kalmus* in the original German. *Kalmus* may refer, not to galangal, but to sweet flag (*Acorus calamus*), an iris-like plant endowed with scented leaves and aromatic, almost spicy roots.

2. TONICS

(i) *Aurum Potabile*

Melissa officinalis (balm)

Ocimum basilicum (sweet basil)

Lonicera periclymenum (honeysuckle)

Calendula officinalis (marigold)

Heather honey to sweeten

Solar plants dominate this list, two of them, balm and marigold, singled out for special praise by Paracelsus and Culpeper respectively, and Culpeper, respectively, though the restorative properties of marigold were believed to be compromised when Jupiter was in the ascendant. Balm has a calming effect but does not significantly diminish mental alertness. Note that some contemporary occultists use either royal jelly or propolis ('bee glue'), sometimes both, in addition to honey. These are obtainable from apiculturists and health-food shops but their nutritional value is debatable. More welcome perhaps is the dash of mead—fermented honey and water with added fruits or spices—sometimes added to the mix.

(ii) *Universal Medicine*

Mentha viridis (mint)

Convallaria majalis (lily-of-the-valley: leaves, flowers also if available)

Lonicera periclymenum (honeysuckle: flowers and leaves)

Senecio vulgaris (groundsel)

Erica (heather) or *Rosmarinus officinalis* (rosemary)

A standard infusion is prepared, with traditionalists using wine as its base. It is said that its effectiveness may be enhanced by the addition of rock rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*), reputed to be a powerful anti-depressant.

(iii) *Balm of Azoth*

Tanacetum vulgare (tansy)

Scabiosa arvensis (scabious/gypsy rose)

$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{Helianthemum} \text{ (rock-rose)} \\ \text{or} \\ \textit{Adiantum Capillus-veneris} \text{ (maidenhair fern)} \\ \text{or} \\ \textit{Anthriscus cerefolium} \text{ (chervil)} \end{array} \right.$

Rock-rose—the dried plant is normally favoured—is held to promote clairvoyance, as well as offer protection from those ill-disposed towards us. As for rue, Shakespeare's “sour herb of grace”, chewing it will sweeten the breath. (Be warned: used topically on the skin, it may react with sunlight and cause blistering, a condition known by the splendid name of called phytophotodermatitis.) Note also that listed here is the *cultivated* variety of chervil, less pungent than its wild cousin, cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), as well as safer, given that cow parsley can easily be mistaken for similar plants, hemlock among them, whose disposition is far less benign.

The word ‘Azoth’, thought to derive from the Arabic term for mercury, regarded by alchemists as the universal solvent, being the unifying force that permeates all matter.

(iv) *Ros Vitae*

Orchis mascula (orchid: root)^{[2](#)}

Rosmarinus officinalis (rosemary)

Medicago sativa (alfalfa)

These ingredients are used to produce a small quantity of essential oil, with a base of rose oil, available from specialist suppliers or from combining any refined oil and rose petals. Before use the orchid tubers, once a favourite ingredient in love philtres, are finely ground and if desired mixed with a little honey. Culpeper informs us the plant comes under the tutelage of Venus. Alfalfa (or lucerne) is used in Chinese medicine to stimulate the appetite, which may explain why horses put out to graze can never get enough of it.

(v) *Potio Priapi (Herbal Aphrodisiac)*

Much nonsense has been written about aphrodisiacs—from rhinoceros horn to oysters and champagne. This little recipe depends on the amative potential of vervain, the traditional *Herba Veneris*, especially when used in conjunction with fennel and rocket. All three may be combined in an infusion, though fennel water obtainable from health shops and pharmacies can also be used. Tradition has it that the herbs should be gathered on a Friday, preferably (but not necessarily) during the passage of the Moon through the first ten degrees of Taurus or Virgo. Ideally, too, the Moon should be well aspected to either Saturn or Venus (and preferably both).

Verbena officinalis (vervain)

Foeniculum vulgare (fennel)

Hesperis matronalis (garden rocket)

In each case the whole plant, root excepted, is customarily used, though fennel water (see above) is often made only from the seeds. This is no impediment to its use.

3. COSMETICS

(i) Witches' Eye-bright

The old texts advise us to boil one dessertspoon of celandine (*Chelidonium majus*) and one of elderflowers (*Sambucus nigra*) in just under a pint of water, then strain off the liquid. The eyes should be rinsed with it as and when required. (Some authorities recommend mixing in one part milk.) The solution should be kept in an airtight container and used within five days. Long a favourite herb for treating eye conditions was *Euphrasia officinalis* (eyebright) but of late it has fallen out of favour, while remaining the homoeopathic remedy of choice.

A commercial eye lotion is probably safer and a lot less trouble.

(ii) Skin Lotion

Gently warm a half pint of buttermilk to which has been added a handful of elder flowers (*Sambucus nigra*), marigolds (*Calendula officinalis*), a few geranium leaves and one or two crushed garlic cloves. The mixture should simmer for a good thirty minutes before being removed from the heat and left for five hours. It must then be reheated and have an ounce of honey added to it. When cold it may be used as a restorative for jaded complexions.

(iii) Anti-wrinkle lotion

Follow the previous *modus operandi*, using half quantities and substituting the following ingredients:

Anthemis nobilis or *arvensis*/*Chamaemelum nobile* (chamomile)

Dipsacus sylvestris (wild teasle roots and especially, heads)

Nymphaea alba (white pond-lily leaves)

or

Sambucus nigra (elder flowers)

Even more effective, possibly, would be a salve containing these same ingredients.

(iv) Wart Cure

Among the many wart removers recommended by folklore are the following:

Juice of greater celandine (*Chelidonium majus*)

Tincture of *Hydrastis Canadensis* (golden seal)

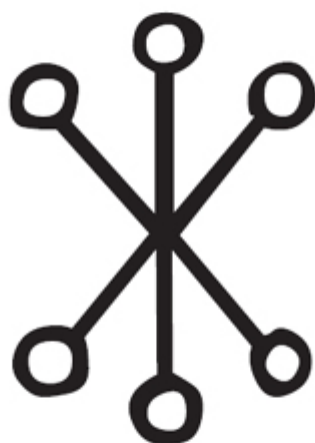
Pulped houseleek (*Sempervivum tectorum*)

In both cases the juice is applied directly to the skin. Houseleek, a plant sacred to Jupiter and deemed therefore to protect the home from thunderbolts, was commonly grown on the roofs of houses, hence its botanical name.

You might do well to supplement your efforts with a caustic pencil (*Plumbum adurentibus!*), obtainable from any pharmacy.

¹ In North America its sturdier cousin *Adiantum pedatum* is a satisfactory alternative

² ‘causeth great heat; therefore it giveth lust unto the workes of generacyon and multiplycation of spermes’ (from Hieronymus Brunschwig's *Liber de Arte distillandi de simplicibus*, as translated by Laurence Andrew (1527)). Culpeper says much the same about the rocket flower (see ‘Potio Priapi’).



APPENDIX 2: MAGICAL SCRIPTS

When you begin to study magical textbooks, you will find that not only have you to reject what is patently silly or outdated in them but also endeavour to work out the meaning of much that is left. This is because magicians have always had a liking for making things as complicated as possible. After pages of allegorical language they will frequently abandon the vernacular and launch into Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek or Latin. Provided you have some knowledge of these languages or can at least lay your hands on a dictionary, you should be able to surmount even this obstacle. But worse is to come, for many texts are also littered with enough ciphers and hieroglyphics to keep more than a dozen Champollions busy.

The alphabets illustrated below are designed to help you decipher some of the strange scripts you will come across sooner or later. Many appear in a compendium of occult lore called *The Magus* or *Celestial Intelligencer; being a complete system of occult philosophy* by Francis Barrett, published in London in 1801. Despite the ‘great variety of curious engravings’ promised on the title-page, among them ten portraits of fiends, the opus is inexpressibly tedious and largely cribbed from the third volume of Cornelius Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosophia* (1533). Fortunately, you will discover that many authors of magical books are on closer acquaintance not as erudite as they make out. What looks at first like Greek or Hebrew often consists only of English words transcribed into Greek or Hebrew characters and for this reason alphabets of both are included in this Appendix. That said, not all magical languages are quite so simple. The Enochian or Celestial language allegedly disclosed by the angels to John Dee and Edward Kelley, like the Senzar in which, according to Mme. Blavatsky, the Book of Dzyan was written, has a vocabulary and rudimentary syntax peculiar to itself. Mme. Blavatsky, nothing if not inventive, suggested Senzar was the progenitor both of Neter Khari, the hieratic speech of ancient Egypt, and of Sanskrit.

HEBREW ALPHABET

א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח
A	B	G	D	H	V	Z	Ch
ט	י	כ (ך in final position)	ל	מ (ם in final position)			
T	I	K		L	M		
נ (ן in final position)	ס		ע	פ (ף in final position)			
N		S		O	P		
צ (ץ in final position)	ק		ר	ש		ת	
Tz		Q		R	Sh		Th

GREEK ALPHABET

Αα	Ββ	Γγ	Δδ	Εε	Ζζ	Ηη	Θθ	Ιι	Κκ
A	B	G	D	E	Z	Ee	Th	I	K
Λλ	Μμ	Νν	Ξξ	Οο	Ππ	Ρρ	Σσ	Ττ	Υυ
L	M	N	X	O	P	R	S	T	U
			Φφ	Χχ	Ψψ	Ωω			
			Ph	Ch	Ps	ō			

HIEROGLYPHIC ALPHABET

Thanks to the accessibility of Sir E. A. Wallis Budge's *Egyptian Language* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 9th ed., 1973), this script is used by many contemporary occultists to prepare talismans.

							
A	B	Ch	G	H	I	K	L/R
							
M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	Sh
							
	T	Th	Tz	U/V			

RUNIC OR FUTHORC ALPHABET

Known also as the Anglo-Saxon Runes, this script is believed by scholars to have come to Britain from Friesland, having originated in Scandinavia. It had fallen out of favour by the end of the 11th Century, possibly a victim possibly of the Norman Conquest, but is still encountered from time to time.

									
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K
									
L	M	N	Ng	O	R	S	T	Th	U

THEBAN ALPHABET

ʒ	ɔ	ʋ	ɱ	ɶ	ʌ	ʏ	ʉ	ʋ	ʌ	ʍ	ʎ	ɀ
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	M	
ʎ	ɱ	ʍ	ɶ	ɱ	ɶ	ʎ	ʏ	ʉ	ʍ	ɱ	ʎ	ʍ
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	V	W	X	Z		

So called because Johannes Trithemius (see [Appendix 3](#)) attributes it to Honorius of Thebes, this script, like the two that follow it, was reproduced by his pupil Cornelius Agrippa in the third volume of his *de Occulta Philosophia*. The identity of Honorius is not known, though possible candidates include Popes Honorius III (1150-1227) and Honorius IV (1210-1287).

MALACHIM ALPHABET

⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘
A	B	Ch	D	G	H	I	K	L	M	N	
⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	⌘	
O	P	Q	R	Sh	S	S	T				
Th	Tz	V	Z								

TRANSITUS FLUVII (PASSING THE RIVER)

Currently a favourite of contemporary witches, especially when copying out the *Book of Shadows*.

⚡	⌈	⌋	⌌	⌍	⌎	⌏	⌐	⌑	⌒	⌓	⌔	⌕
A	B	Ch	D	G	H	I	K	L	M	N	O	
⚡	⌈	⌋	⌌	⌍	⌎	⌏	⌐	⌑	⌒	⌓	⌔	⌕
P	Q	R	S	Sh	T	Th	Tz	V	Z			

WRITING OF THE MAGI

Attributed to Paracelsus but possibly derived by him or others from earlier sources, it is traditionally inscribed on talismans.

⚡	⌈	⌋	⌌	⌍	⌎	⌏	⌐	⌑	⌒	⌓	⌔	⌕
A	B	Ch	D	G	H	I	K	L	M	N		
⚡	⌈	⌋	⌌	⌍	⌎	⌏	⌐	⌑	⌒	⌓	⌔	⌕
O	P	Q	R	S	Sh	T	Th	Tz	V	Z		

A MASONIC/ROSICRUCIAN ALPHABET

Known sometimes as the Pigpen cipher, this script or a version of it was widely used by Masonic Lodges in the early 18th Century, among them the present author's Mother Lodge, founded in 1723.

⌈	⌋	⌌	⌍	⌎	⌏	⌐	⌑	⌒	⌓	⌔	⌕	⌖
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
⌈	⌋	⌌	⌍	⌎	⌏	⌐	⌑	⌒	⌓	⌔	⌕	⌖
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

OGHAM ALPHABET

Thought by some to be named after Ogmios, the Celtic god of speech and eloquence, this script appears on stone monuments throughout Ireland and along the coast of Wales, its origins debated by scholars. Some occultists insist it is nothing less than the written language of Atlantis. Few believe them.



ENOCHIAN (CELESTIAL/ANGELIC) SCRIPT

Purportedly revealed by angels to Edward Kelley and dutifully recorded between 1582 and 1587 by Dr. John Dee, this was said to be the language, a precursor of Hebrew, employed by God to call the world into being, as well as the language used by Adam prior to the Fall to converse both with his Maker (and presumably, Eve). Revived and put to magical use by MacGregor Mathers and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, it was called Enochian in tribute to Enoch, father of Noah and the last person to understand it prior to Dee and Kelly. Philologists suggest it is a synthetic language derived from English.

À Á Â Ã Ä Å Æ Ç

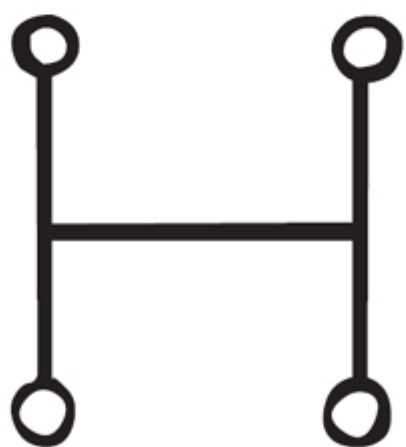
A B C/K D E F G H

Ì Í Î Ï Ñ Ò Ó Ô Õ

I/Y L M N O P Q R

Š ſ à á â ã

S T U/V/W X Z



APPENDIX 3: OCCULT WHO'S WHO

The person who decides to study occultism—and magic in particular—will find himself in company as strange as any encountered on the astral planes. In this Appendix you will meet a few of them. The following pages can offer no more than a short selection, but even they include a motley crowd, among them saints, sinners, cranks and sages. Some pursued knowledge for its own sake or for the good of others, while some contrived only to profit by it. Whatever the motive, few are ever dull. And that, in the end, may be their saving grace.

Abano, Pietro d' (c. 1250–1315). An Italian philosopher who studied medicine in Paris, then returned to Padua to practise as a physician. There he wrote some highly respected medical books as well as a treatise on magic called the *Heptameron* or *Magical Elements* (1496), based on the *Key of Solomon* but with additional information about, for example, the creation of magical circles. Their form, he tell us, 'is not alwaies one and the same; but useth to be changed, according to the order of the spirits to be called, their places, times, daies and hours'. That said, his authorship, mentioned by Cornelius Agrippa in his *De Occulta Philosophia*, has recently been disputed. Suspected of practising sorcery by the Inquisition, he was acquitted, but later re-arrested, and accused of heresy. He died in prison while awaiting trial.

Abaris (fl. 400 B.C.). Mentioned by Herodotus and Plato, this Scythian magician, a priest of Apollo, was famous for his long fasts and extraordinary feats of levitation. He deserves a mention because he is reputed to have been the tutor of Pythagoras (q.v.). The Neo-Platonist Iamblichus (q.v.) has much to say about him in his *Vita Pythagorica*.

Abramelin (c. 1400). Little is known of him except what can be gleaned from the introduction to the *Book of Sacred Magic, as delivered by Abraham the Jew to his son Lamech* (1458). Here, Abraham of Worms (c. 1360–1450) recounts to his son how, having travelled from Germany to the banks of the Nile (where else?), he learned the true secrets of the Kabbalah from a local magus named Abramelin. Eventually the narrator was handed the two manuscripts (*Divine Science* and *True Magic*) that form the basis of the book. The work is famous both for the magical oil already described

in [Appendix 1](#), above, and for an elaborate ritual whose purpose was to meet one's Higher Self or Holy Guardian Angel, something attempted with disastrous results by Aleister Crowley at Boleskine House in Scotland. For years there persisted among occultists a rumour that those who followed Abramelin's instructions risked coming to a sticky end. Nowadays one hears it less often.

Agrippa (Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim) (1486–1535). This is the famous Agrippa whose work *De Occulta philosophia libri tres* ('*Three Books of Occult Philosophy*') has been mentioned previously. In it the author argues that magic offers us the means of understanding God and His presence in the natural world. The same book, and others in which Agrippa attacks *inter alia* the Church's distortion of the original Christian message, brought him not unexpectedly into conflict with the Inquisition. Born in Cologne and a graduate of the University of Dole in Burgundy, Agrippa traveled widely throughout Europe, studied briefly under Trithemius (q.v.) and was a soldier, lawyer and respected physician. In 1510 he was sent on a diplomatic mission to England. It was long accepted that in later life Agrippa rejected magic but today it is believed he merely rejected certain statements in his earlier work, written a good ten years before it first appeared.¹ In 1559 a spurious 'fourth' volume of his *De Occulta philosophia* was published by someone who styled himself 'Agrippa'. In it are instructions on exorcism and the conjuration of spirits.

Albertus Magnus (c. 1200–80). Theologian, sometime Bishop of Ratisbon and mentor to St. Thomas Aquinas, he was a man of wide learning—a *doctor universalis*—who earned distinction as a scholastic philosopher, scientist and theologian. Some have claimed he was also an accomplished alchemist and having discovered the Philosopher's Stone, effected the transmutation of base metal into gold. Among other achievements attributed to him was the construction of a statue so life-like that it became endowed with human speech. Alas, there is no sound evidence for any of this. On the contrary in his work *De Mineralibus*, Albert categorically denied the feasibility of transmutation. Beatified in 1622, he was canonized in 1931, his Feast celebrated on 15 November.

Apollonius of Tyana (fl. c. 4 B.C.) Much of what we know about Apollonius, an itinerant Pythagorean whose achievements led to comparisons with Jesus, stems from a biography, in part fanciful, by Philostratus. Allegedly based on the memoirs of Damis, the philosopher's

travelling companion, it recounts how Apollonius journeyed to Italy, Spain, North Africa, even as far as India. So filled is the narrative with miraculous events and teachings similar to those recorded in the Gospels that by the 3rd Century many worshipped Apollonius, regarding Jesus as a mere impostor. Among them was the Emperor Aurelian. So similar was the narrative of their lives that by the Middle Ages it was deemed prudent to dismiss Apollonius as a mythical character. Among his recorded exploits were the quelling of tempests and the reanimation of a Roman matron who had died shortly before, while in between such miracles he went about preaching brotherly love and the forgiveness of one's enemies. At the end of his earthly mission he reportedly ascended bodily to heaven. A number of Western occultists regard him as their *Magister* or spiritual patron, and commemorate his life by an act of special reverence at sunset on May 1. In the summer of 1854 the magician Eliphas Lévi (q.v.) performed a ceremony designed to summon up his shade. He duly put in an appearance—lean, beardless and wrapped in a shroud. The experiment seems to have been a bit of a flop all the same.

Bacon, Roger (1214–1292). Born to well-to-do parents in Somerset he matriculated at Oxford and stayed there to lecture on Aristotelian philosophy, subsequently moving to the University of Paris. At some point his interest turned to the experimental sciences, his belief being that ‘the end of all true philosophy is to arrive at knowledge of the Creator through knowledge of the created world.’ He is credited with pioneering work on optics and primitive aerodynamics, and he was also the first Westerner to produce a treatise on the manufacture of gunpowder.

Sometime around 1245 he entered the Franciscan Order but now expanded his interests to include astrology, alchemy and magic. Until then he had enjoyed the favour of Pope Clement IV but with the pontiff's death in 1268, many within his Order accused him of heresy. In 1277 or 1278 he was imprisoned on that account or at best placed under house arrest. Little is known of him subsequently. His last work, showing him to be as feisty as ever, was unfinished when it appeared in 1292. He probably died before completing it.

It is said that the grimoire *De Nigromancia*, attributed to Bacon, was clandestinely used by the Roman Catholic Church to exorcise demons indifferent to its own Rite of Exorcism.

Barrett, Francis (born c. 1774) Author of a treatise called the *Magus or Celestial Intelligencer* (1801), described on the title-page as a complete system of occult philosophy. In reality it reproduced Cornelius Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* together with the spurious *Fourth Book*, as well as the *Heptameron* of Pietro d'Abano, already available in a compendium published in 1655 and conveniently translated into English. Barrett's version—he supplements it with contributions of his own—might have attracted little notice, had it not become a favourite of the French mage, Eliphas Lévi (q.v.). Prominently displayed in the book is an advertisement in which the author advises readers ‘that, having been indefatigable in his researches in those sublime Sciences, of which he has treated at large in this book’, he is able to offer private tuition to individuals eager to be:

‘initiated into the choicest operations of Natural Philosophy, Natural Magic, the Cabala, Chemistry, the Talismanic Art, Hermetic Philosophy, Astrology, Physiognomy, &c.&c. Likewise they will acquire the knowledge of the RITES, MYSTERIES, CEREMONIES and PRINCIPLES of the Ancient Philosophers, Magi, Cabalists, Adepts &c...’

Candidates were invited to present themselves at an address in Marylebone ‘between the hours of eleven and two’. It is not known how many responded but rumour has it that Edward Bulwer-Lytton, though not born until two years after the book's appearance, may have been among them. Barrett is also believed to have gone to Cambridge to tutor an occult fraternity within the University where, as it happens, Lytton was a student from 1822 to 1826.

Beuther, David. Guardian of the Mint at Dresden in the late fifteenth-hundreds, he was also ‘Expert in the Practice of Alchemy to the Elector of Saxony’ as declared on the frontispiece of his book *Zwei Rare Chymische Tractate* (1718). Unfortunately he and his two assistants, anticipating a success which turned out slow in coming, lived the good life at the Elector's expense. When the latter's patience ran out, Beuther was sentenced to be flogged, have two fingers removed, and spend the rest of his days in prison. The Elector nevertheless gave him one last chance to manufacture gold, confining him to his laboratory. It was there, after a botched attempt to drug his guards and escape, that Beuther, despairing of success, committed suicide. He was found slumped over his workbench.

Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna (1831–91). Shortly after her eighteenth birthday, Madame Blavatsky (*née* von Hahn) deserted her home in Russia and her husband of but a few months in order to travel. Such travels are a classic beginning to many occult careers, but her own ranged farther and wider than most. They took off when, several biographers maintain, she became the companion, probably mistress, of an opera singer named Agardi Metrovitch.

At some point she turned up in Cairo, having survived a shipwreck on the way. There she ran the *Société Spirite*, a venture soon abandoned when it emerged that the spiritualistic phenomena on offer owed more to the living than the dead. If she is to be believed she subsequently visited Canada, North America and Mexico before setting off for India. From there she tried, unsuccessfully at first, to enter Tibet, finally gaining access in 1856. After that she returned to Russia, emerging—according to her account—to fight with Garibaldi's Redshirts at Mentana in 1867. Six years later she was in New York again dabbling in Spiritualism, still much in vogue, but while defending the genuineness of séance room phenomena, she poured scorn on what she called their 'spooky' origins. By 1873 she had secured a few devoted admirers, among them Colonel H. S. Olcott (1830–1907), shortly to become, as she put it, her lifelong 'chum'.

On November 17, 1875 the Theosophical Society was founded. At first it attracted little interest but then came her first book, *Isis Unveiled*, purportedly an esoteric history of mankind and religion. Within two years she had sailed to India where the Society set up shop in the Madras suburb of Adyar. Soon the phenomena, effected, she claimed, by the superhuman Masters overseeing her work, were coming thick and fast much to the dismay of Christian missionaries. In spite of scandals and a devastating report by an investigator dispatched by the Society for Psychical Research in London, her influence continued to grow. When Mme. Blavatsky, by then living in London, died in 1891 she had, it was estimated, some 100,000 disciples in countries all over the world. Her death is commemorated by the Society on May 8 ('White Lotus Day').

The years following her death were turbulent ones, with the secession of the Society's American section and numerous defections from its ranks. It would, however, survive the bogus visions (and pederastic fumblings) of 'Bishop' Leadbeater, as well as the desertion of Krishnamurti, promoted by Annie Besant (1847-1934) as the next World Teacher, a manifestation of

the Lord Maitreya. That said, every occultist must at some time tackle *The Secret Doctrine*, Mme. Blavatsky's *magnum opus*, though until one finds the stamina, her *Key to Theosophy* will do by way of substitute.

Bolingbroke, Roger († 1441). An Oxford prelate who dabbled in astrology and magic. Having implied in a horoscope that the nineteen-year old Henry VI would die and be succeeded by his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, he was indicted, together with four others, for trying to murder the king. Among the accused was a woman named Margery Jourdemayne, popularly known as 'The Witch of Eye' and a well-known purveyor of spells and potions. She and Bolingbroke were the only ones executed for their alleged involvement in the affair: she was burned at the stake, while he was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn on 18 November 1441. The pair turn up in Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part 2*.

Bulwer-Lytton, Edward (1803–73). Author of well-known works like *The Caxtons*, *The Last Days of Pompeii* and *Zanoni*, he was a prolific writer of imaginative fantasies, among them *A Strange Story*, *The Coming Race* and *The Haunted and the Haunters*. He was also a friend of Eliphas Lévi (q.v.) whom he entertained in London. With Lévi's assistance, Lytton is thought to have set up his own esoteric order which, according to the Rev. Montague Summers, a writer whose distaste for magic and witchcraft verges on the paranoid, still flourished at Cambridge well into the nineteen-forties. (In 1928 Summers produced the first English translation of the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), a notorious work intended to brief prosecutors on the nefarious practices of witches.)

Such was Mme. Blavatsky's admiration for Lytton that she adopted (and where appropriate, adapted) many of his ideas, notably those found in *The Power of the Coming Race* and *Zanoni*. It has even been suggested that Lytton was the 'Master of my Dreams' she claimed to have first seen in the flesh one moonlit night in Ramsgate. (In another version the encounter happened in 1851 while she was out strolling in Hyde Park with her father, though on that occasion the man she met was indubitably Indian.) Terms like 'vril' and Dweller on the Threshold, the latter a staple of esoteric writing, were invented by Lytton, as was the notion of a hollow earth, popular among the proto-Nazis of the Thule Society in Germany and post-war apologists for Hitler, seen as an avatar or incarnate deity by, for example, Miguel Serrano and, before him, Savitri Devi. Interestingly, one

of Lytton's lesser known books, *Rienzi, the last of the Tribunes*, was turned into an opera by Richard Wagner. It was Adolf Hitler's favourite.

Butler, Walter Ernest (1898-1978). A member, later ordained priest, of the Liberal Catholic Church, an institution founded by two Theosophists, James Wedgwood and C. W. Leadbeater, the latter regarded, even by Theosophists, as Svengali to Mrs. Besant's Trilby. The young Butler joined Dion Fortune's Society (in those days "Fraternity") of the Inner Light but left soon after, possibly before, her sudden death in 1946. At the start of the nineteen-sixties he collaborated with Gareth Knight (q.v.), then responsible for a publishing venture called Helios and a magazine called *New Dimensions*, in creating a correspondence course on the Kabbalah (or Qabalah, as they preferred to spell it). He was also the author of several books of which the first, *Magic: its Power, Ritual and Purpose* (Aquarian Press, London, 1961) is probably the best. The others, among them *The Magician: his Training and Work* (1963), *Apprenticed to Magic* (1965), and *Magic and the Qabalah* (1968) are more wordy but less informative. He had by then rejoined the Society of the Inner Light, now under new management, but in 1973 became de facto head of a new group called Servants of the Light, an offshoot of the correspondence course he had helped to develop. (A close collaborator, Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki took over the organisation when he retired in 1976.) As a priest of the Liberal Catholic Church, he was by all accounts a gentle soul, naturally clairvoyant and, unlike some of his "smells-and-bells" *confrères*, took his pastoral duties seriously.

Cagliostro, Alessandro di, Count (1743–95). His real name was Giuseppe Balsamo but he changed it to Cagliostro, the name of a great-uncle, going on later to add the spurious *titre de noblesse*. His early travels supposedly took him to Greece, Malta and Egypt, as well to Rhodes, where, he would later claim at his trial in Paris, he studied occultism under Althotas, believed by some to have been none other than the Comte de Saint-Germain (q.v.). (The name Althotas, according to Eliphas Lévi, means 'Thoth, Envoy of the Egyptians'). On his return to Italy he married Lorenza Serafina Feliciani, no older than fourteen when they met, and the pair later set off on a tour of Europe, amassing a considerable fortune through the sale of love philtres, rejuvenating potions and alchemical catalysts. In London Cagliostro became a Freemason (Lodge No. 289) on 12 April 1777 and again met Saint-Germain, by then no longer Althotas.

More travels followed but in 1784 he was imprisoned in the Bastille for several months, being implicated in a scandal known as the Affair of the Diamond Necklace. Acquitted of any involvement he left again for England before travelling to Rome where his luck finally ran out. Denounced by his wife, now restored to the bosom of the Church, and duped by two agents of the Inquisition into showing them his book *La Très Sainte Trinosophie* ('The Most Holy Trinosophia'), he was put on trial and sentenced to death, later commuted by Pope Pius VI into one of life imprisonment. Following an unsuccessful attempt to escape, he was transferred to the Fortress of San Leo where, after enduring grave hardship, he died in 1795, though some suggest he was murdered. None of which deterred Madame Blavatsky from claiming he was alive long after his supposed death, having turned up at her father's house in Russia. There 'in the midst of winter he produced by magic power a plate full of fresh strawberries for a sick person who was craving it.' Another story has it that he strangled a priest whom he had summoned to hear his confession, then donned his habit and made his escape from gaol, subsequently travelling to America where he lodged with the family of Benjamin Franklin, a fellow Mason he had formerly known in Paris. Doubtless there are some who believe he is still there. Not among them was Aleister Crowley who insisted that Cagliostro was none other than himself in a previous life.

Casanova, Giacomo (1725–98). Son of itinerant actors, he was born in Venice and brought up by his grandmother. At the age of twelve he began to study ecclesiastical law at the University of Padua, graduating five years later. Admitted to Holy Orders, though never a fully-fledged priest, he was advised to abandon his career in the Church, something he probably never much fancied, so procured a commission in a Venetian regiment. Bored with soldiery, he next turned to gambling and when that failed to make him rich, became a violinist.

By 1750 he was in Paris and soon a darling of the ladies. It was around then that he became a Freemason, eventually joining the 'Egyptian' lodge ('La Sagesse Triomphante') founded by Cagliostro in Lyons. In 1755 he returned to Venice. There he was duped into showing his books on magic and perhaps worse, on Masonry to a state spy, Giovanni Manucci. Next day he was arrested and locked up in the Piombi ('The Leads'), a wing of the Doge's palace that served as a prison. But Casanova had no intention of

languishing in jail. On October 31, 1756, he achieved that spectacular escape he would describe in his *Histoire de ma Fuite* (1786).

Free again, he journeyed to Paris where he was put in charge of the state lottery. After more travels, sometimes in the service of the French authorities, he returned to Paris in 1760 and was again fêted by the *haut monde*. Befriended by a rich widow, Mme. d'Urfé, her credulity fully matching her fortune, he was soon exploiting her for all he was worth. Saint-Germain and Cagliostro had already done the same, the first encouraging her to think he could turn base metal into gold, the second, not to be outdone, offering to introduce her to the shade of Paracelsus, having relieved her of half-a-million francs beforehand. Casanova's promise was to rejuvenate her, then in her fifties, by inducing a self-induced pregnancy, at the end of which she would give birth to a male child. As the infant drew his first breath, her own spirit would take up residence within him and so start a new life. All this came to public knowledge when an accomplice of Casanova's spilled the beans, though in his own account he claims the experiment was interrupted by the unexpected death of his patroness.

There followed more travels in Europe until he finally arrived in Bohemia where he secured the post of librarian and archivist to Count Waldstein. There he used his time to pen his memoirs. Earlier he had written verse, drama and operatic libretti, even managing a translation of Homer's *Iliad*, but it is the *Story of my Life* he is remembered for. He died on 4 June 1798 and was buried in Duchkov, now part of the Czech Republic.

Cellini, Benvenuto (1500–71). In his autobiography (*Vita scritta da lui medesimo*) the Florentine goldsmith and sculptor left a valuable description of two necromantic conjurations he attended in 1534. These took place in, of all places, the ruined Coliseum. An extract from his account is given on pp 248 of this book.

Cochrane, Robert (1931–1966) Born Roy Bowers, he claimed, as would Alex Sanders (q.v.) and others, to have a hereditary connection to witchcraft, stretching back in his case several hundred years. Having once been a blacksmith, he named the coven he founded after Tubal Cain, according to *Genesis* iv, 22 ‘an instructor of every artifice in brass and iron’. Doreen Valiente (q.v), Gerald Gardner's sometime High Priestess, joined the group, attracted by its spontaneity and closeness to the natural

world. (She eventually left, exasperated by Cochrane's relentless criticism of Gardner and his form of witchcraft, the latter something she had helped to fashion.) Another title Cochrane awarded his group was the Royal Windsor Cuveen, while his correspondence with an American admirer, Joe Wilson, augmented by the ideas of Ruth Wynn Owen (q.v.) would give rise to something called '1734', a combination of numbers which, in one of his letters, Cochrane implausibly identified with the Tetragrammaton. After his death the Royal Windsor Cuveen metamorphosed into The Regency, its leading light an enthusiast of Arthurian legend who by happy coincidence, shared the same name—White—as the author of *The Once and Future King*. In 1966, Cochrane committed suicide. Both 1734 and the Roebuck Tradition survive him, the latter rent by schism.

Cook, Grace (1904–1979). In 1936 Mrs. Cook, a professional medium was instructed by her spirit guide, White Eagle ('Mohawk Chief of the League of Six Nations of the Iroquois') to found an organisation called the White Eagle Brotherhood at Burstow Manor in Surrey. A year later White Eagle changed his mind and recommended a move to Pembroke Hall in West London. Bad choice. Within four years the premises had been flattened by a German bomb. By the time new headquarters were found at Liss in Hampshire, it had emerged that White Eagle was formerly an Egyptian High Priest named Is-Ra, mentor to the beautiful priestess, Ra-min-ati who, *mirabile dictu*, was Mrs. Cook in a previous life. (Ra-min-ati went on to marry well, ending up Queen of Egypt.) Earlier White Eagle had been Hah-Wah-Tah, again a High Priest, this time Mayan, his home somewhere in the foothills of the Andes. That was 10,000 years ago (which predates by 7000 years the earliest Mayan remains hitherto uncovered). Once again teacher and pupil were reunited, Mrs. Cook (or Ra-min-ati), having in those days been Minesta, Hah-Wah-Tah's most cherished protégée. To this day Minesta is the preferred name for Mrs. Cooke among the Faithful.

Crowley, Aleister (1875–1947). Born Edward Alexander and according to the popular press, 'the Wickedest Man Alive', his magical pedigree was second to none. Among the previous identities to which he laid claim were Pope Alexander VI, Edward Kelley and Eliphas Lévi, all three featured in this appendix. On 18 November 1888, he was received into the Outer Order of the Golden Dawn at its Isis-Urania Temple and given the magical name of Frater Perdurabo, an appropriate choice, given the resilience he

displayed throughout his peripatetic life. Unpopular with his fellow Golden Dawners and, because of it, denied access to the Second Order following his probation, he travelled to Paris where MacGregor Mathers (q.v.), visible head of the Order (the invisible bosses resided on the Astral Plane) overruled his subordinates in London and promoted him on the spot. This led to a schism within the organisation, even a court case, with Mathers and Crowley going on to start magical Orders of their own.

By then Crowley, with family money at his disposal, had travelled widely, got married and finally caught up with his Holy Guardian Angel. (His first attempt, at Bolingbroke House in Scotland ended in disaster.) The turning point in his life happened in a Cairo museum where, guided by his wife's clairvoyance, he came upon a mortuary slab bearing the exhibit number 666, that of the Beast in the Book of Revelation. The gods, his wife assured him, were waiting to get in touch. They did not wait long. Within three weeks—on 8 April 1904—a disembodied voice claiming to be that of Aiwass, spokesman for Horus, began dictating over three days what would be Crowley's *Liber AL vel Legis* or *Book of the Law*, its central thesis that humanity was on the threshold of a new Aeon and that Crowley was its prophet. Also disclosed was a new moral imperative: Do what Thou wilt shall be the whole of the law. This would become the guiding precept of the magico-religious system known as Thelema (from the Greek θέλημα or 'will'). More travels followed, notably in the Far East, until finally, back in London at the end of 1907, he founded a new occult order A.'.A.'. modelled on his *alma mater* the Golden Dawn, but with a new 'Thelemic' bias. Soon afterwards there appeared the first issue of his twice-yearly publication, *The Equinox*, now highly valued by collectors. (The series ended in 1913.)

Shortly before the outbreak of the Great War, Crowley was contacted by Theodor Reuss (q.v.), head of the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.), who is said to have spotted similarities between the Order's rituals and those described in Crowley's *Book of Lies*. Satisfied that both were drawing from the same suprasensible source, Reuss not only admitted Crowley into the O.T.O. but pushed him well up the hierarchical ladder, later making him its head in Great Britain. Always up to a challenge, Crowley promptly rewrote the staid, Masonically derived rituals hitherto in use, as well as those of the Gnostic Catholic Church that Reuss invented to meet the devotional needs of his followers. What is uncertain is whether Reuss, shortly before

his death in 1923, officially appointed Crowley his successor or whether Crowley appointed himself.

Three years earlier Crowley had established his infamous Abbey of Thelema, in reality a run-down house near Cefalù in Sicily. There, as in Rabelais' fictional Abbey of that name, the prevailing ethos was 'Do as thou wilt.' Soon Crowley and his meagre band of followers were being accused by the press of drug-taking, debauchery, even child-sacrifice, prompting Mussolini to order his expulsion from Italy. Back home, his reputation for beastliness could not match the growing beastliness of Hitler, though for a time he did mistake the Führer for a fellow Thelemite. More travels followed, as well as bankruptcy in the wake of an unsuccessful libel case. By the end of the war, money gone and health compromised, Crowley moved to Netherwood, a boarding house in Hastings. There the young Kenneth Grant (q.v.) briefly worked as his factotum, his reward being private lessons in the *ars magica*. (Among the visitors was Gerald Gardner (q.v.) who it is said paid Crowley £300, a hefty sum in those days, to join the O.T.O and leapfrog the first three grades by way of bonus.) Crowley died on 1 December 1947. At the obsequies in Brighton Crematorium his *Hymn to Pan* was among the pieces read aloud by the poet Louis Wilkinson. The popular press was suitably affronted, claiming a Black Mass had been celebrated on council-owned property. It must have made The Great Beast chuckle.

If Crowley was largely forgotten by the public when he died, his fortunes have revived since then. Renewed interest in the O.T.O and its ecclesiastical adjunct, the Gnostic Liberal Church, have secured him more followers than he ever had in life. He has been the subject of several biographies, the first by John Symonds whom Crowley appointed his literary executor (*The Great Beast*, Rider, London, 1951). Together with Kenneth Grant, Symonds also edited Crowley's *Confessions*, described as an 'Autohagiography' by their subject, his tongue halfway to his cheek. Halfway but no further.

Dashwood, Sir Francis (1708-81). Founder of the Order of the Friars of St. Francis of Wycombe, also known as the Monks of Medmenham after Dashwood leased Medmenham Abbey from a friend, turning part of it into a pseudo-Greek or Roman temple. There young aristocrats enlivened their debauches with acts of devotion, often lubricious, to the gods and goddesses of antiquity. Though known today as the Hellfire Club, it was

neither the first nor the only one of numerous groups, with several in Ireland, bearing that name. The Medmenham motto was 'Do as Thou Wilt' and this, together with a reputation for licentiousness, attracted the sympathetic notice of Aleister Crowley.

In a famous etching by Hogarth, Dashwood is depicted worshipping a tiny nude Venus.

Dee, Dr John (1527–1608). A distinguished mathematician and astronomer with a parallel interest in astrology and hermeticism, Dee studied at the universities of Louvain and Brussels, then taught Euclidian geometry at the University of Paris before returning to England in 1551. He came into his own seven years later when the Catholic Queen Mary was succeeded by her half-sister, Elizabeth 1st, who reportedly asked Dee to pick the most propitious date for her coronation.

Dee's involvement in occultism deepened when he met Edward Kelley, a younger man with mediumistic gifts which the Doctor, despite his learning, so patently lacked. Soon their 'spiritual conferences' persuaded Dee that angelic beings had singled him out for a higher purpose. Before he discovered what that purpose was, Kelley had switched his attention to alchemy, claiming to own a red powder that turned base metal into gold. By chance, Dee knew a Polish nobleman, Prince Laski, with similar interests. In the summer of 1583 he and Kelley, accompanied by their wives, travelled to Poland and thence to Prague, Kelley to manufacture gold and Dee to chat with angels.

In time they secured the favour of Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor, King of Bohemia and himself a fan of alchemy. But Kelley failed to come up with the goods and ended up behind bars. Subsequently released and told to keep on trying, he again disappointed his patron so back to gaol he went. What happened next is unclear. Dee's son (whose real father may have been Kelley, since the angels had previously urged them to swap wives) maintained that Kelley sought to escape but was recaptured.

Dee was more fortunate. Returning to England and still in favour with the queen, he became warden of a theological college in Manchester. He spent his final years at his home on the Thames in Mortlake, by then close to eighty, impoverished and in poor health. There was a brewery on the site when I visited it in the nineteen-seventies. That has since gone and the space is scheduled for development.

Dee's *Liber Logaeth* (Book of the Speech of God) is preserved in the British Museum, as is the obsidian mirror or *speculum*, in which Kelly saw the spirits (with Enochian texts emerging like ticker-tape from their mouths). Among the believers were MacGregor Mathers and Aleister Crowley. The latter's own experiments, in part conducted with Victor Neuburg (q.v.) in Algeria, are recorded in his book *The Vision and the Voice* (Liber 418). By contrast most philologists agree that the Angelic Language owes more to English than to anything spoken by God when creating the world or chatting to the prelapsarian Adam.

Encausse, Gérard Anacleto Vincent (1865–1916). A medical doctor, he is better known as Papus, the name of a spirit in the *Nucléon*, a work falsely attributed to Apollonius of Tyana (q.v.). Something of an occult 'all-rounder', Papus was a member of the Theosophical Society, the Alpha et Omega Lodge run by MacGregor Mathers (q.v.) in Paris, the Universal Gnostic Church (used by Reuss (q.v.) as a model for his own Gnostic Catholic Church), the O.T.O., and the Kabbalistic Order of the Rose-Croix (see Stanislas de Guaita, *below*). More importantly, he claimed in 1891 to have acquired the papers of Martinez de Pasqually (1700-1774), entitling him to co-found a Martinist group called l'Ordre des Supérieurs Inconnus. This attracted many supporters, among them several prominent artists and intellectuals, hence its minor influence on literature and art, notably the Symbolist movement. (Philippe Encausse, Papus' son, would seek to revive the group in the nineteen-fifties.)

Somehow or other Papus also found time to run his medical practice, as well as churn out more than two dozen books on a variety of esoteric topics, from palmistry and numerology to astral travel and mediumship. Celebrated for his skills as alchemist, astrologer, healer and magician, he is said to have been consulted more than once by Tsar Nicholas of Russia and the Tsarina, warning them—though little predictive talent was needed—of the impending Revolution. At the outbreak of war in 1914, Papus was among the first to enlist but died in Paris on 16 October 1916, a consequence of his time in the trenches. In 1987, quite by chance, I came across his grave at Père-Lachaise cemetery in Paris. Someone had just left a bunch of red roses.

Faustus, Dr. Johannes Georg (c. 1474–c. 1537). His date and place of birth are uncertain. Even his existence has been called into question. By today, however, evidence suggests he was an itinerant physician and

astrologer, often accused of fraud and paradoxically, of being in league with the Devil. In one of his letters Johannes Trithemius (q.v.) warns an astrologer friend to stay well clear of '*Faustus junior*', mentioning among other foibles his over-fondness for young men. Within a few years of his death, books were written about him, even ascribed to him, one being the inspiration for Christopher Marlowe's *Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* (1589). Since then he has become the subject of numerous plays, operas and ballets, the best known perhaps being Goethe's *Faust* (Parts 1 and 2). His fame is such that I remember seeing in Brussels a range of skin creams labelled Dr. Faustus. No doubt he peddled similar ones in his lifetime.

Fludd, Robert (1574–1637) A physician committed to a 'hermetic' approach to reality, possibly after discovering the works of Paracelsus (q.v.) on his travels in Europe. He was a contemporary and vocal supporter of William Harvey, first to describe in full the circulation of blood. Closely allied to the Rosicrucians of his day, he wrote several books in their defence, as well as others expounding his belief in the 'as above, so below' rule central to hermetic thought. His most important work in this respect, with a title worthy of its ambitions, is *Utriusque Cosmi, Maioris scilicet et Minoris, metaphysica, physica, atque technica Historia/The metaphysical, physical, and technical history of the two worlds, namely the greater and the lesser*, published in Germany between 1617 and 1621. In another of his books, *Mosaical Philosophy*, he presents a version of creation allied to the Kabbalah, his view being that as all proceeded from God, the sum total of everything, so all will eventually return to Him. For him the act of creation was a separation of two principles, the active (light) and passive (darkness), within the unity of God, thereby generating three 'worlds', the first being God or the divine archetype, the second the universe or macrocosm, and the third man or microcosm.

Although Fludd, writing pseudonymously in his *Summum Bonum*, denied practising magic—to do otherwise would have landed him in trouble—many occultists perform a short commemoration on the anniversary of his death (8 September). This involves meditating on the celebrated diagram of Man the Microcosm in his *Utriusque Cosmi-Historia* etc.

Forman, Dr. Simon (1552–1611) Born near the cathedral city of Salisbury, Forman moved to London as a young man, becoming an astrologer and medical doctor, a not unusual combination at the time. By

all accounts he saved countless lives during the plagues of 1592 and 1594, later describing his experiences in *Discourses on the Plague* (1595). Resented by the Royal College of Physicians and accused of resorting to ‘magical potions’, he was banned from practicing medicine in London—and later imprisoned for disobeying the interdiction. Only in 1603 did he finally secure a license to practice, continuing to write about medicine and astrology until his death. His fellow astrologer William Lilly reports that one afternoon in September 1611, Forman, by then 59, informed his wife Jane, thirty years his junior, that he would die the following Thursday evening. As Lily records ‘Monday came, all was well. Tuesday came, he was not sick. Wednesday came, and still he was well: with which his impertinent wife did much twit him in the teeth. Thursday came, and dinner was ended, he very well. He went down to the waterside, and took a pair of oars to go to some buildings he was in hand with in Puddle-dock. Being in the middle of the Thames, he presently fell down, only saying, “An impost, an impost”, and so died.’

Fortune, Dion (1890–1946). Born Violet Mary Firth in Llandudno, on the North Wales coast, she is better known as Dion Fortune, an adaptation of what was the Firth family motto (*Deo Non Fortuna*) and the ‘magical’ name she adopted upon joining the London branch of Alpha et Omega, the magical order MacGregor Mathers, then living in Paris, had established after the dissolution of the Golden Dawn. Mathers died in 1918. Soon afterwards his wife Moina returned to London and took over the running of things. Within a year Fortune, like Moina something of a bossy-boots, left to join another Golden Dawn offshoot, the Stella Matutina, before founding her own Fraternity, later Society, of the Inner Light. (She also launched the Christian Mystic Lodge of the Theosophical Society but jumped ship a year later.) By then Moina and she had fallen out, either because, as some suggest, Fortune was judged to have betrayed too many secrets in her early books or because her spiritual insight and mediumistic gifts made Mrs. Mathers jealous. (Their astral jousting is described in Fortune's *Psychic Self-Defence*.)

An earlier influence on her was an Irishman named Theodore Moriarty, esotericist and committed Freemason, whom she is believed to have met in 1916. He would feature in several of her books, usually disguised as the mysterious Dr. Taverner. (As she herself later admitted, ‘if there had been no Dr Taverner, there would have been no Dion Fortune.’) Also fateful—it

would for a time change the focus of her magical speculation—was Thomas Penry Evans (1892-1959), a medical doctor from South Wales whom she married in 1927. Some of their time was spent in a cabin she had acquired (and sometimes rented out) at the foot of Glastonbury Tor. Evans believed, not least by his wife, to have an eye for the ladies, left her in 1939 and later remarried. By then her occult priorities had changed and she spent much of her time endeavouring to secure an Allied victory by magical means, while on Sunday evenings she went about a blacked-out London demonstrating clairvoyance at Spiritualist churches. She was not, some said, terribly good at it.

Her end was unexpected. Admitted to the Middlesex Hospital early in 1946, having complained of tiredness and a recurrent gum infection, she died of leukemia within days. Her lucid prose is compulsory reading for all would-be magicians, whether one agrees with the substance or not.

Fox, Margaret (1833–1893), ***Kate*** (1837–1892). The sisters Fox are included here because they are widely regarded as the founders of modern spiritualism. Their story began in Hydesville, then a small village near Rochester, Wayne County, New York. One night In 1848, rapping sounds were heard in a room where the girls were thought to be asleep. When their parents investigated, they found their daughters, Kate aged twelve and Margaret three years older, sitting up in bed conversing with the invisible agency responsible for the tapping. The adults, soon joined by curious neighbours, hastily devised a code by which the spirit might answer questions by giving an appropriate number of raps. Soon Kate and Margaret, now joined by their older sister Leah (1814-1890), were famous, demonstrating their medium-ship to packed audiences throughout the North-East. Others were quick to copy them and in very little time there erupted a veritable fever of knockings, rappings and table-turnings. When this reached its height the sisters astonished everyone by confessing that the manifestations were a hoax. The raps, they explained—and obligingly demonstrated—were produced by dislocating the toe and other small joints in their feet. Far from finishing the girls' career, however, their admission gave it a boost. Bigger crowds than ever flocked to witness the dexterity with which the ladies clicked their joints on command. Until, that is, one sister announced that her confession had been false and that the spirits did after all produce the raps. A bewildering series of confessions, retractions and more confessions followed until it became impossible to tell where the

truth lay. In the meantime rival mediums were producing phenomena more spectacular than any managed by the toe-clicking Foxes, among them transfiguration, spirit photography and ectoplasmic simulacra of the dead. In the end all three sisters slipped unobtrusively off the spiritualistic bandwagon which they, more than anyone, had helped set in motion.

Gaffarel, Jacques (1601–81). A priest and theologian who became librarian to Cardinal Richelieu. Like Pico della Mirandola (q.v.), Athanasius Kircher, Christian Knorr von Rosenroth and before them, Raymond Lully (q.v.), he believed the Judaic theology of the Kabbalah should be reinterpreted in the light of Christian revelation, with the Tree of Life an expression of the Incarnation and redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The first three sefirot were thus deemed to signify the Trinity of Father (Kether), Son (Hokmah) and Holy Spirit (Binah), the last linked also to the Virgin Mary as Mother of God (ΘΕΟΤÓΚΟΣ).

Gardner, Gerald Brosseau (1884–1964). Born in Blundellsands, an affluent suburb of Liverpool, he was dispatched to warmer climes at an early age, ostensibly for health reasons. He ended up in Ceylon after the woman in charge of him married a wealthy tea-planter. Apart from periods of home leave, during one of which he met and married his wife, he remained in the Far East until his retirement in 1936, variously employed as tea grower, rubber planter and finally, colonial civil servant. Only with a move to Highcliffe on the South Coast of England would he finally come into his own, for it enabled him, by his own account, to join a coven of local witches. Doubts have been voiced about the existence of any such coven, certainly one whose rituals resembled those encountered today, many of Gardner's own devising.

Like Crowley and Fortune, Gardner claimed to have worked magic to secure an Allied victory during World War 2. (According to him, he and his fellow witches thwarted Hitler's invasion plans in 1940 by conjuring up 'mighty forces...of which I dare not speak' during a Lammas rite deep within the New Forest.) By the end of the the war he had forsaken Highcliffe, having acquired a financial interest in a nudist colony in Hertfordshire. There he set up a coven of his own, endeavouring to impose some cohesion on its practices and drawing on traditional beliefs, Masonic ritual and such elements of the Golden Dawn as were in the public domain. In May 1947 he visited Aleister Crowley on four occasions, allowing one to suppose that Crowley dispensed expert advice, as well as alerted him to

those of his works he might usefully exploit. Money might have changed hands, over and above the £300 Gardner reportedly paid for admission to Crowley's O.T.O. (Included in the price was immediate elevation to the Order's fourth degree ('Prince of Jerusalem') and a copy of the *Liber Legis* or Book of the Law.) In these circumstances it was disingenuous of Gardner to declare seven years later that although there were 'certain expressions and certain words used [in witchcraft] which smack of Crowley', these were there because 'he [Crowley!] borrowed things'.

In 1949 Gardner's second novel, *High Magic's Aid*, was privately published. Three years would pass, however, before he met the woman whose role in the formation of 'Gardnerian' witchcraft would all but match his own. This was Doreen Valiente who had been so intrigued by an article on witchcraft in *Illustrated* magazine that she wrote to Cecil Williamson, owner of the Folklore Museum of Superstition and Witchcraft on the Isle of Man, who passed on her request for information to Gardner, then the museum's witch-in-residence. After meeting Mrs. Valiente at the home in Highcliffe of a Mrs. Woodford-Grimes, Gardner's High Priestess, and a further exchange of correspondence Mrs. Valiente was initiated a year later.

It was only then that Mrs. Valiente, no stranger to magic, recognised the bits and pieces Gardner had imported from elsewhere, those from Crowley causing her disquiet. (Some verses cribbed from Rudyard Kipling did the opposite as the poem they came from was one of her favourites.) As a result she persuaded him to undertake a complete revision of the texts, notably the Book of Shadows, with herself doing much of the work. The result shows that she too was not averse to plagiarism but she chose her sources well and reconciled them skilfully with passages composed by herself or by Gardner, with a respectful nod to Charles Leland (q.v.) also. Her reward was elevation to High Priestess.

In 1954 came Gardner's factual treatment of the subject, *Witchcraft Today*, written with Mrs. Valiente's help. Such was the attention the book received and so high the number of recruits that Gardner began to regard publicity, good and bad alike, as welcome. Others were not so sure, especially when witches were increasingly treated as fair game by the popular press, with hints of devil worship, black magic and, with a sure sense of what readers expect, rampant sexual excess.

Soon Gardner acknowledged the need to put the record straight, so with the help of the ever dependable Mrs. Valiente produced a second book, *The Meaning of Witchcraft*, its appearance in 1959 provoking a fresh spate of enquiries but also a renewed bout of negative comment. Gardner seemed indifferent, continuing to give interviews to all and sundry, alarming others by what they perceived as his peculiar lack of judgement. Doreen Valiente repeatedly voiced her disquiet. Peeved by her criticism, Gardner suddenly produced a set of Wiccan Laws, hitherto unknown and doubtless composed for the occasion. These required that every High Priestess quit the job when past the first flush of youth. Mrs. Valiente, thirty-five, took the hint and resigned. Time would bring a reconciliation of sorts but their collaboration was never resumed, though Doreen paid generous tribute to him following his death, aged 79, while on a Mediterranean cruise in 1964. He was buried in Tunis.

Gessner, Hans Friedrich. A German farmer who became convinced that treasure lay buried in his vineyard. To discover its precise whereabouts he and two friends, Heichler and Zenner, resolved to question the spirits. For that purpose they engaged the services of a young man named Weber, a student at the University of Jena who, importantly, owned a copy of *The Key of Solomon* and the magical instruments needed for the task. He informed them that the treasure was guarded by an entity called Nathael, adjutant to the solar spirit, Och, so on Christmas Eve 1715, he accompanied Gessner and Zenner to a small hut. (Heichler stayed home after Weber insisted on an odd number of participants.) They were supplied with some hot coals to keep them warm. When Heichler visited the hut the following afternoon, he found Gessner and Zenner both dead, the latter's body mutilated, and Weber out of his mind. That night three men were sent to guard the hut, but by the following morning one was dead and the other two barely alive. There is every likelihood that the deaths were caused by smoke from the coals. Not that this fully explains the mutilation of Zenner's body or the harrowing tale told by the surviving watchmen when restored to their senses.

Grant, Kenneth (1924–2011). For several months in 1945 Grant served as secretary and general factotum of Aleister Crowley (q.v.), receiving magical instruction in lieu of wages, as well as admission to the O.T.O. Elevated to the IX° shortly after Crowley's death, he was appointed head of the Order's British section. Given a free hand by the Order's supremo,

Karl Germer, he demonstrated considerable flair, introducing novel ideas and practices. By 1955, however, Germer decided things had gone too far. This followed Grant's decision to establish something called the New Isis Lodge, its specific mission to exploit something called the Sirius-Seth current. Deeming his views heretical, Germer expelled Grant from the O.T.O that same year, though the latter paid no heed. On the contrary when Germer died seven years later Grant pronounced himself Supreme Head of the Order, a claim no one in the parent organisation took seriously. Contributing to Germer's disapproval had been Grant's fondness for extra-terrestrial beings—the preferred term was ‘interdimensional’—although back in 1918 Crowley had flirted with similar notions. Indeed a portrait of one such entity, Lam, purportedly drawn from life, was published by Crowley in *The Equinox*. According to Grant, merely to gaze at it was to ‘invite potent contact. One feels an immediate sensation of lightness, of weightlessness, and then a sensation of falling... of being sucked into a vortex....’

For close to half a century the Order headed by Grant, nowadays known simply as the Typhonian Order, continued to function, though most of its work was done by correspondence, while his writings, opaque at best, were valued by the so-called Chaos magicians of the nineteen-seventies and ‘eighties. Through his wife Steffi, Grant met and befriended the artist Austin Osman Spare, then something of a lost soul, though his account of their relationship and of the painter's esoteric interests is unreliable.

Guaita, Stanislas de (1861–1897) A respected poet with an interest in occultism, he sought to revive Rosicrucianism in France, soliciting the help of Joséphin Peladan, like him an admirer of Eliphas Lévi and at the age of twenty-six, author of *Le Vice suprême* (1884), an occult-themed novel that enjoyed popular, if not critical, success. In 1888 the pair founded the Kabbalistic Order of the Rose-Croix, advised and encouraged by Gérard Encausse (q.v.). Among its members were the composers Claude Debussy and Erik Satie. Guaita died, aged 36, of an overdose thought to be of cocaine. By then his former associate Peladan had renounced magic and gone off to found a more devotional, ostensibly Catholic, version of the Rose-Croix. A source of disagreement between them was de Guaita's insistence that evil and good were morally neutral, each necessary to sustain the equilibrium that wards off chaos.

Hall, Manly Palmer (1901–1990). Born in Canada and best known for his *Secret Teachings of All Ages*, a huge popular success when it appeared in 1928 and still published by the Philosophical Research Society set up by him in 1934 thanks to the generosity of two wealthy admirers. (The book's full title is *An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy: Being an Interpretation of the Secret Teachings concealed within the Rituals, Allegories and Mysteries of all Ages*.) With a library of some fifty-thousand books, the society still occupies a listed building, now designated a Historic Cultural Monument in Los Angeles.

Hermes Trismegistus. The name is proper to the Greek Hermes and the Egyptian god Thoth, both associated with magic and writing. Given the Hellenistic influence, indeed presence, in Ancient Egypt, it may be less an amalgam of two deities than the same deity under different names. The Wisdom God Thoth (known also as Tehuti) was chiefly worshiped at Chmun, known also as Hermopolis, and deemed to be the mediator between opposites, a role alchemists would attribute to Celestial Mercury. (C. G. Jung later wrote of the archetypal Hermes as a conciliatory and transformative force.) Towards the end of the 15th Century books attributed to Hermes began to appear in Europe, among them a collection of texts collectively known as the Corpus Hermeticum. (They were translated from Greek by the Florentine scholar Marsilio Ficino.)

Two other texts deserve mention, the *Asclepius*, preserved in a Latin translation from the third century A.D, and the better known Emerald (or Smaragdine) Tablet, source of the 'As above, so below' formulation mentioned in this book. The latter, thought to derive from an arabic text, the *Kitab Ustuqus al-Uss al-Thani* (Second Book of the Elements of Foundation) by Jabir ibn Hayyan was first translated into Latin in the twelfth century. A version rendered into English was among Sir Isaac Newton's papers at the time of his death.

Readers curious to learn more about the mythical Hermes and the tradition bearing his name cannot do better than read the works of Frances A. Yates, notably her *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (1964).

Honorius of Thebes. Accredited author, though probably a mythical figure, of an early and in its day, influential *grimoire* called the *Sworne Booke of Honorius* ('Liber Juratus'). Supposedly containing the combined knowledge of several magicians, it is believed to date from the 13th

Century, although the oldest available manuscript is from 1629. (Dr. Dee owned a copy.) A deeply Christian text, despite advice on the conjuration of demons, it gives preference to the invocation of angels, even offering its readers a ritual that affords them access to the Beatific Vision. It should not be confused with *The Grimoire of Pope Honorius*, a French text from the late 17th Century, falsely attributed to Pope Honorius III (1216-27) and in effect a parody of Catholic liturgical practice. Eliphas Lévi (q.v.) was affronted by its ‘superstitious and sacrilegious’ character.

Iamblichus (250–325). Founder of the Syrian school of Neoplatonism and a student of Plotinus, first and arguably greatest of the Neoplatonists. Implicit in his speculation was an intermediate reality between the material and non-material worlds, one that contained something of both. Its ambiguous (or, rather, dual) nature allows us to experience the supra-physical while ourselves still part of our physical environment. Access to it empowers us to partake of spiritual realities, as well as prepare for the post-mortem existence awaiting us. This return to the divine, as Iamblichus described it, is achieved by ritual, its ‘sacramental’ character a guarantee of success. According to Iamblichus prayer, meditation and concentration cannot of themselves do the same, not least because they engage the reason, whereas magic, by contrast, transcends it.

‘Inquire Within’. Pseudonym of Christina Stoddard, improbably described on the title page of her book, *Light Bearers of Darkness* (1930, new ed. 2006), as ‘for some years a Ruling Chief of the Mother Temple of the Stella Matutina and R.R. et A.C.’. (The Stella Matutina, an offshoot of the Golden Dawn, was run by Robert Felkin, a medical doctor, and briefly included Dion Fortune among its members.) Her central thesis is that Masonic and esoteric organisations are the instrument of secret forces bent on world conquest. As in the work of her contemporary, Nesta Helen Webster or indeed that grand-daddy of them all, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Jews are singled out for special blame. Stoddard also wrote another book *The Trail of the Serpent* (1936) also still in print (2010).

Kardec, Allan (Léon-Hyppolite-Denizart Rivail) (1804–69). Kardec was the father of continental spiritualism. His *Spirits Book* (1857), a series of questions and spirit answers, described as the Bible of modern ‘spiritism’ (French: *spiritisme*) is generally used to distinguish it from the anglo-american variety (‘spiritualism’), the main difference being that the former takes reincarnation for granted, while the latter does not. Kardec was a

schoolteacher trained by Pestalozzi, and published books on education. By 1855 he had taken up table-turning, an import from America, and the messages he received form the substance of his book. Published under the name Allan Kardec, believed by him to have been his own in a previous incarnation (when he was a druid) it was followed by *The Mediums' Book* (1861) and four others, the last of them published after his death. Highly regarded in Brazil where his followers are numbered in millions, he has had streets and public buildings named after him, as well as been featured on postage stamps. His tomb at Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris remains a place of pilgrimage for the faithful, perennially covered in flowers and requests for intercession.

Kelley, Edward (see Dee, Dr John).

Knight, Gareth (1930–) In the nineteen-fifties he joined the Society of the Inner Light, still coming to terms with the loss of its founder, Dion Fortune (q.v.). Within ten years Knight had set up a publishing company Helios—his *Practical Guide to Occult Symbolism* (1964) would be its first, perhaps biggest success. Later he would become the editor of a magazine called *New Dimensions*, fated to fall on hard times. His knowledge of the Inner Light, post-Fortune, is probably unsurpassed and evident in the many books he has written, among them an autobiography. With W. E. Butler (q.v.), he collaborated on a Kabbalistic correspondence course. From that initiative would spring a group named The Servants of the Light.

Kramer, Heinrich (1430–1505). A Catholic priest, member of the Dominican Order, he was co-author with Jacob Sprenger of the *Malleus Maleficarum* or *The Hammer of Witches*. Published in the fifteenth century, this terrible book described ways of identifying and dealing with witches. The civil authorities used it as their vade-mecum in the great witch-hunts that followed, though the Inquisition declined to endorse it, still less the practices it recommended. A new English translation was produced—with unconcealed relish—by Montague Summers (q.v and Page 113, footnote 6) in 1928.

Leland, Charles Godfrey (1824–1903). An American folklorist whose *Aradia, or the Gospel of the Witches*, published in 1899, first referred to witchcraft as the ‘Old Religion’, suggesting that in parts of Romagna and Tuscany, there were still ‘entire villages in which the people are completely heathen.’ This was said in the commentary accompanying Leland's translation of an Italian text—the *Vangelo* or ‘Gospel’—

transmitted to him by an Italian witch, Maddalena, whom he claimed to have met in Florence eleven years earlier. Other material in the book, much of it supplied by Maddalena, includes rites, spells and incantations, as well as an account of how the goddess Diana, Queen of the Witches, brought the universe into being, creating in the process a solar regent named Lucifer, by whom she had a daughter, Aradia. Dispatched to Earth by her mother, Aradia sought to empower the weak and the oppressed by teaching them the secrets of witchcraft.

Gerald Gardner's indebtedness to Leland (or, if you prefer, Maddalena) is evident in his 'Charge of the Goddess', the original version containing passages lifted directly from Leland.

It has been suggested that Aradia may have been a 14th Century witch in Etrusca – famous even now for its witches – whose wonder-working reputation was such that over time she acquired mythical status. On the other hand Leland may have simply made the whole thing up.

León, Moses de (1250–1305). A Jewish scholar who is held to have put together the several books that comprise the *Zohar* or *Book of Splendour*. In order to lend the work more authority he attributed it to the 2nd Century rabbinic teacher and reputed miracle worker Shimon ben Yochai. Usually presented in five volumes, three are called *Sefer ha-Zohar al ha-Torah*, the other two being *Tikkunei ha-Zohar* and *Zohar Chadash*, the last thought to be a late addition. As well as providing an interpretation of the Torah, it contains lengthy digressions about Shimon ben Yochai and others. Presumably intended to foster devotion among Jews in Spain, the *Zohar* had become by the early Renaissance a favourite of occultists throughout Europe.

Lévi, Eliphas (1810–75). The adopted Hebrew name of Alphonse-Louis Constant. Originally destined for the Church, he quit the seminary of St. Sulpice at the age of twenty-six, having fallen in love with one of his young catechists. In 1841 he was sentenced to eight months in prison for publishing a socialist tract, *La Bible de la Liberté* but undeterred, went on to write more political pamphlets, spending further time behind bars as a result. He is remembered for his books on magic, their subject matter better suited to his colourful prose. In what many regard as his finest book, *Dogme et rituel de la haute magie* (1856), he sought to persuade his contemporaries that the sacred writings of ancient civilizations like

Babylonia, Assyria and India, but above all Israel, represent a common tradition which lies at the heart of all religions.

Lévi was particularly keen on the Kabbalah, its methods according to him as exact as mathematics but its speculation more profound than all systems of philosophy combined. Not only did it offer privileged access to the cryptic teachings of Abraham, Enoch, Solomon and, not to be forgotten, Hermes Trismegistus, but empowered the magician to control unseen forces active in what he termed the Astral Light. Although in his later books, written after an ambivalent reconciliation with the Church, he cautions readers against the actual practice of magic, claiming that its true benefit lies in the knowledge it brings, he himself had tried his hand at it. One such occasion was in 1854 during a visit to London when he conjured up the shade of Apollonius of Tyana (q.v.), albeit with mixed results. Compared with the extravagances of Lévi's usual literary style the account of the evocation, given in his *Transcendental Magic* is remarkably straightforward.

There is in Lévi's work much that is useful and interesting, together with much that is pretentious and silly. What his books do have in plenty is a certain period, indeed literary charm.

Lewis, H. Spencer. Emperor of the Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (A.M.O.R.C.), founded in Florida in 1925 but later relocated to San Jose in California. It claims to be the true guardian of Rosicrucian truth, but then, so do several rival institutions. For so many dollars down and the rest in installments the organization offers nothing less than the complete mastery of life. This extraordinary service comes in the form of a correspondence course which can be supplemented—at extra cost—by the Emperor's own books on reincarnation and the meaning of the pyramids. The latter feature prominently in both the text and illustrations of the society's literature, possibly because it traces the origins of Rosicrucianism back to Akhenaten, the Pharaoh who introduced monotheism to Egypt during his seventeen-year reign. Lewis claimed to have received his authority from several of the pseudo-Rosicrucian bodies active in mainland Europe at the start of the twentieth century, among them the O.T.O. Lewis corresponded extensively with its founder, Theodor Reuss but resented the influence of Aleister Crowley, as Reuss may himself have done by then.

After his death in 1939, Lewis' son Ralph Maxwell Lewis took over as Emperor, succeeded in 1987 by Gary L. Stewart. (Mr. Stewart, later

dismissed, set up a rival group, the Ordo Militia Crucifera Evangelica which, he would claim, better represented the ideas of Lewis Spence.) Other Rosicrucian fraternities exist, some more successful than others, but are too numerous to mention. Rich or poor, none has been able to prove direct descent from the original Christian Rosenkreuz (q.v.), let alone demonstrate his historical existence.

Lully, Raymond (1235–1315). Born Ramon Lull in what today is Palma di Majorca, he joined a Franciscan order after a religious conversion at the age of thirty. Though some of his works—and these were numerous—were condemned by the Church he never fell from ecclesiastical favour. Since then efforts have been made to dissociate him from the many works on alchemy and magic attributed to him but there is reason to suppose he was not unsympathetic to either. The rumour has persisted that he succeeded in obtaining alchemical gold, sometimes called *aurum Raymundi* in his memory.

Mathers, Samuel Liddell MacGregor. The ‘MacGregor’ was a Scottish affectation of his own devising, somewhat akin to Crowley's conversion of his birth name (Alexander) to its Scottish equivalent, Aleister or indeed the change from Mina to the more Celtic-sounding Moina that Mrs. Mathers would favour. It was to Mathers that the Rev. F. A. Woodford and fellow Mason, Dr. W. Wynn Westcott, deputy Coroner for the London Borough of Hoxton, showed documents which the former had acquired but neither could decipher. Mathers, better informed, recognised much of the script as Enochian and obligingly put it into English. With the papers was a letter urging the reader to contact a certain Anna Sprengel in Nuremberg, something Westcott did in October 1887. Imperatrix of a German Rosicrucian Order, Frau Sprengel (who may or may not have existed) promptly authorised the trio to found a sister organisation, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, thoughtfully bestowing on each the grade of Adeptus Exemptus, thereby sparing them the bore of moving up through the ranks like everyone else. Following Woodman's death in 1892, Woodford and Mathers, respectively Praemonstrator and Imperator, ran the organisation until the former had to choose between magic and his day job. He chose the latter.

Among those who joined the Order's mother lodge, named Isis-Urania, were Annie Horniman, daughter of a wealthy tea importer, and Mina Bergson, like her a former student at the Slade School of Fine Art. Mina,

sister of the philosopher Henri Bergson, became Mrs. Mathers in 1890. Other members included the actress Florence Farr, the esotericist A. E. Waite and journalist Arthur Machen. In 1892 the Irish poet W.B. Yeats (q.v.), sometime admirer of Madame Blavatsky, joined the Order six years before the arrival of Aleister Crowley (q.v.) and its fragmentation two years later.

By then Mathers—his magical name was *Deo Duce, Comite Ferro* ('God is my guide, my Companion the Sword')—was living in Paris and increasingly filled with self-importance, awarding himself the title Comte de Glenstrae, and less mundanely, that of Ipsissimus, the *nec plus ultra* of magical, if not human, attainment. He died in November 1918. From influenza according to Dion Fortune. From the strain of being Ipsissimus, according to his wife. By then he and Crowley had long ceased to be friends.

Without Mathers the Golden Dawn or what is often called the Western Esoteric Tradition (though in reality only part of it) would not have come into being.

Merlin. The wizard of Arthurian legend and a mythical figure according to historians, though some occultists, Rudolf Steiner (q.v.) among them, have preferred to think otherwise. The scholarly view is that he was the invention of Geoffrey of Monmouth, appearing in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c. 1136) and later, the *Vita Merlini*, although he may in part have been modelled on a bard named Myrddin Wyllt (or Wild Merlin) whose home in Northern Britain accounts for the name Merlinus Caledonensis given to him by Geoffrey. According to the Black Book of Carmarthen (c. 1300) Merlin sought refuge in the forest of Celyddon after witnessing the Battle of Arfderydd, emerging several years later endowed with the gift of prophecy. Geoffrey's Merlin would arrange for King Uther Pendragon to slip into bed with Igraine, Duchess of Cornwall, at Tintagel and so become the father of King Arthur.

The belief persists that Merlin lies buried on Bardsey island off the coast of North Wales. True or not, he has lived up to what Edmund Spenser said of him in 1596:

*For Merlin had in Magick more insight
Than ever him before, or after living wight.* (The Faerie Queene,
Book III)

Molay, Jacques de (c. 1243–1314), last grand master of the Knights Templar, founded in 1129. Rumours of the Templars' vast wealth persuaded the impoverished King Philip IV of France to connive with Pope Clement V to have the Order suppressed. Summoned to Paris in 1307, ostensibly to discuss a new Crusade, de Molay and his fellow knights were arrested on the king's orders. Confessing under torture to various charges, the most famous being worship of a goat-headed effigy named Baphomet, de Molay was burned at the stake on 19 March 1314. Before his death he was said to have commissioned nine of his men to continue the work of the Order in secret and so preserve its heritage. It is from these that latter-day Templars, many with esoteric pretensions, claim their descent. Eliphas Lévi suggested the French Revolution was the Order's revenge on the French monarchy.

As noted elsewhere there exists a latter-day Templar organisation, the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.), founded in the eighteen-nineties by a group of Austrian and German occultists, prominent among them Theodor Reuss (q.v.), Karl Kellner and the sometime Theosophist Franz Hartmann. (Rudolf Steiner (q.v.) may also have been involved.) In Freemasonry, too, there is an Order of Knights Templar, though it denies any connection to its historical namesake.

Mora, Pietro. A doctor, alchemist and magician in 17th Century Milan, he is thought to have produced a variant of the *Key of Solomon* entitled *Zekerboni*. (Casanova owned a copy, as did the antiquary John Aubrey.) It was said that he was put to death after being accused of spreading the plague, but records suggest this may have been a totally different Mora (Giovanni Giacomo), executed for the same offence in 1630. In his *Witchcraft and Black Magic*, Montague Summers (q.v.), fully persuaded of Mora's guilt, rounded on him with characteristic gusto:

‘Mora and his coven of witches, having thus been apprehended and convicted of the foulest blasphemies, of sorceries, murders and mischiefs innumerable, as plain as the open day, one and all paid the penalty of their audacious crimes. The very house where Mora dwelt, the theatre of unutterable abominations, was razed to the ground, and upon the spot they raised a tall pillar whereupon was set a bronze tablet engraved with the full story of his wickedness and all the evil he had wrought.’

Nectanebus (4th Century B.C.). Last of the native Egyptian pharaohs and a talented astrologer, he opted to flee Egypt in disguise, divining that

the Persian army would defeat his own. Escaping to Macedonia and setting up shop, he was consulted by the great and the good. Among these, according to Callisthenes, was Queen Olympias, impatient to learn if she would bear a son. He assured her she would, helpfully sleeping with her for that purpose or impregnating her by magical means. Their young son, the future Alexander the Great, accidentally caused his death by playfully pushing him into a pit. This time the planets had neglected to forewarn him.

Neuburg, Victor (1883–1940). Poet and writer, Neuburg was in his mid-twenties when, shortly after their first meeting, he joined Aleister Crowley's Argenteum Astrum, adopting the magical name Frater Omnia Vincam. Subjected by his mentor to numerous indignities, all of which he accepted as part of his magical training, being as Crowley admitted in his *Confessions*, 'one of the best natured people that ever trod this planet'. (Such treatment is not unusual: Madame Blavatsky subjected C. W. Leadbeater—or 'W. C' Leadbeater, as she called him—to the same sort of thing, having him empty her chamber pot each morning during a sea voyage to India, while Gurdjieff's attitude to his disciples was equally harsh.) In 1909 he accompanied his mentor on a trip to North Africa where they performed a series of rituals, adapted from the Angelic system of Dr. Dee (q.v.) and Edward Kelley, but enlivened by sexual shenanigans not envisaged by them or presumably, the angels.

Crowley and Neuburg were at it again in 1913, this time in a magical operation known as the Opus Lutetianum or Paris Working, though they parted company shortly after, with Crowley sailing to America and Neuburg, following a brief spell in the Army, settling in Sussex where he established the Vine Press. He is credited with fostering the career of many young poets, Dylan Thomas among them, as well as that of his biographer Jean Overton-Fuller (*The Magical Dilemma of Victor Neuburg*, W.H. Allen, London, 1965). Miss Overton-Fuller chronicled the lives of three other people listed in this Appendix: Madame Blavatsky, Francis Bacon and the Comte de Saint-Germain.

Nostradamus (1503–66). Michel de Nostredame, usually Latinised as Nostradamus, was a French apothecary who, thanks to the patronage of Catherine de Médicis, became physician-in-ordinary to her son, King Charles IX. Already a well-known figure at Court, he owes his enduring fame to *Les Prophéties* (Lyon, 1555), a book of prophetic poetry published

in three volumes (or ‘Centuries’) and written in highly stylised, deliberately ambiguous language, as much to hedge his bets as avoid problems with the Church. (The book was eventually placed on the Index in 1781.) Unfortunately the ambiguity makes it difficult to assess the relevance and thus the accuracy of his predictions. Also a steady earner were the Almanacs he published each year and sometimes more often, from 1550 to his death (which, needless to say, he is said to have predicted). Since then his prophecies have from time to time been deemed accurate but always post facto.

Olivet, Antoine Fabre (1767–1825). An encounter with the ghost of a woman he had formerly loved aroused his interest in the supernatural. He eventually became a well-regarded healer, specialising in the cure of deaf mutes. His fame rests, however, on a two-volume work, *The Restitution of the Hebrew Tongue* (1815/1816). In it he maintains that the Hebrew of the Pentateuch was a version of ancient Egyptian adapted by Moses to describe the process of Creation. Included in the book is a glossary of the relevant Hebrew words and a partial translation of the Book of Genesis. Towards the end of his life he established an initiatic order sometimes called ‘True’ Masonry, though he substituted agricultural symbols for the architectural sort favoured by orthodox Masons. Highly esteemed by the occultists that succeeded him—Eliphas Lévi (q.v.) was an admirer—he is best remembered today for his work in reviving Occitan, the ‘Langue d’Oc’ of his birthplace in Southern France.

Owen, Ruth Wynn (1915–1992). Sometime actress and drama coach, as well as close friend of the poet Dylan Thomas, she was born in Watford, although her father came from Anglesey. Without providing much by way of corroboration, she proclaimed herself heir to a magical tradition stretching back to Brân, alias Bendigeidfran or Brân the Blessed, a character in the *Mabinogion*. (His head supposedly lies buried under the White Mount on which the Tower of London now stands.) Her teachings, influenced by the dubious scholarship of Margaret Murray, as well as James Frazer's *Golden Bough* and Welsh mythology, are preserved by several groups, among them one calling itself (with scant regard for Welsh usage) Y Plant Bran. She herself had a Quaker funeral.

Papus (see Encausse, Gérard).

Paracelsus (c. 1490–1541). Born at Einsiedeln in what is now Switzerland, his real name was Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim.

After studying at various Universities, finally qualifying in medicine at Ferrara in Emilia-Romagna, he travelled through Europe and beyond, reportedly visiting Egypt, India and Tibet. At every opportunity he sought to enlarge his medical knowledge by, as he wrote, 'learning from tramps, butchers and barbers,' even, he adds 'gipsies, sorcerers, wandering tribes, robbers, and felons'. The first to reject the authority of Galen and Celsus, still considered infallible fourteen centuries after their death, he urged his fellow-doctors to let observation and clinical experience determine how they treated their patients.

What Paracelsus recognised in each human being was the microcosmic parallel of a macrocosmic whole. A practising alchemist, tutored in the *Ars Magna* by Abbot Trithemius (q.v.), as well as a committed Neoplatonist, he seems to have been wary of the magical speculation found in, for instance, Cornelius Agrippa (q.v.), likewise a pupil of Trithemius. (Trithemius himself was similarly guarded in his response to Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosophia*.) That said, he believed the planets had a role to play in medicine and that talismans were effective in curing disease.

In 1526 he was appointed Professor of Medicine at the University of Basel. So controversial was his approach that in 1538 he was dismissed. Three years later he settled in Salzburg but died soon afterwards. (In 1981 I came across his grave quite by chance.)

Throughout his life Paracelsus sought to demonstrate that only harmony, consciously experienced between the universe and us could bring the fulfilment for which we unconsciously yearn. 'Man', he pointed out, 'is a microcosm, or a little world, because he is a product of all the stars and planets of the firmament, from the earth and the elements; and is thus their very quintessence.' His death is commemorated by occultists in Germany and Austria on 24 September and healing operations that solicit his help are traditionally held on that day. Throughout Europe there are currently several clinics, as well as pharmaceutical companies, that bear his name and in some cases heed his therapeutic advice.

Pickingill, George (1816–1909). Formerly regarded by contemporary witches as one of their own, Pickingill lived in Canewdon, Essex and by all accounts seldom left it. (In a newspaper interview towards the end of his life he confessed that he'd never been to London, barely thirty miles away.) His fame derives from a description of him in Eric Maple's *Dark World of Witches* (1964) and from articles contributed to a magazine called

The Cauldron, by E. W. Liddell, professedly a distant relation and an initiate of the same family tradition. The articles were later published as two essays, *Old George Pickingill and the Roots of Modern Witchcraft* and *Mediaeval Witchcraft and the Freemasons*, later combined in one booklet, *The Pickingill Papers* (1994). It is a sign of how discerning witches had become since Gerald Gardner's time that few, if any, took him seriously.

Prophetissa, Maria. Known also as Mary the Jewess, she was first mentioned by the Gnostic writer Zosimus (4th Century) and reported to have lived a couple of centuries earlier, prompting some to maintain she was none other than Miriam, the wily sister of Moses. An alchemist living in Alexandria, or according to others, Memphis, she was credited with the invention of a special furnace for spagyric experiments, as well as the alchemical residue known as *caput mortuum*. The term 'bain-Marie' still used in chemistry and cooking is named after her. Such was her fame that some authorities credited her with discovering the Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus or even writing it. To her is attributed also the alchemical adage: one becomes two, two becomes three, and from the third comes the one as the fourth.

Pythagoras (c. 570–c. 490 B.C.). Said to be the first person to whom the name 'philosopher' or 'lover of wisdom' was applied, he is credited with many remarkable discoveries in mathematics, medicine, astronomy and music, as well as having the gift of divination. Having settled in Crotona, he established a brotherhood, ascetic and exclusive, devoted to religious observance (centred on the cult of Apollo), as well as philosophical and scientific speculation. Little is known of his teachings other than what has been attributed to him but his supposed views on transmigration and the significance of numbers have earned him the esteem of occultists. Heraclides Ponticus (4th Century), an early advocate of heliocentric theory, reports that Pythagoras could remember four of his previous lives in detail.

The Stoic philosopher Diogenes Laërtius drew a parallel between the teachings of Pythagoras and those of druidism.

Rasputin, Grigori Yefimovich (1869–1916). Much has been written about Rasputin's baleful influence on Tsar Nicholas II and the Tsarina, forever anxious about their haemophiliac son. Neither was unfamiliar with esotericism. Indeed between 1900 and 1905 Gérard Encausse (q.v.) was among several occultists who visited Russia, in his case several times,

while seances were a popular pastime at Court. (The celebrated medium, Daniel Dunglas Home had been a big favourite.) It was a period of religious dilettantism, with sects and prophets in and out of favour with the season. Rasputin alone stayed the course. A notorious womaniser and drunk, he may genuinely have believed that, as he assured gullible females, there burned inside him a divine spark that offered salvation to those in search of it. Salvation, however, demanded repentance, and repentance presupposed sin, hence the chance he gave them to sin heartily. They then had something worth repenting.

The circumstances of his death after a supper party at Prince Yusupov's palace are well known: stabbed and shot in the back, he was wrapped in a curtain and tossed into the Neva river. Eighteen months later the Tsar and Tsarina, together with their children, were shot in a cellar at Ekaterinburg.

Regardie, Francis Israel (1907–1985). Born in London to Orthodox Jewish parents, the fourteen-old Regardie emigrated with his family to the United States but within eight years was back in Europe, having been invited by Aleister Crowley—with whom he had begun a correspondence—to be his secretary. (Some maintain that Regardie invited himself, as Kenneth Grant (q.v.) would do later.) He and Crowley later fell out but when Regardie published the book that made his name, *The Garden of Pomegranates*, he dedicated it to his former mentor and boss. (Later he would produce a study of Crowley's work, again recording his indebtedness, called *The Eye in the Triangle*.) Back in America he joined the Stella Matutina, by then in its twilight days (see Crowley and Mathers, above) and subsequently published a book, *The Golden Dawn*, which caused consternation among those who felt he had betrayed the secrets vouchsafed to him.

Reuss, Theodor (1855–1923). With the support of Wynn Westcott, one of the founders of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and Gérard Encausse (q.v.), he established in his native Germany several quasi-Masonic orders, among them the Rites of Memphis and Misraïm, pocketing the fees paid by postulants such as Rudolf Steiner (q.v.) and his future wife, Marie von Sivers. Later he collaborated with Franz Hartmann (q.v.) and Carl Kellner, an industrial chemist, in founding the O.T.O. (Ordo Templi Orientis). His position as head (or, more correctly, *Outer Head*, the Inner ones being on the astral plane) was later eclipsed and finally usurped

by Aleister Crowley who declared himself his successor (*see* Crowley, *above*) two years before Reuss died in 1923.

Ripley, George (1415–1490) A well-respected alchemist—no less a figure than Sir Isaac Newton thought highly of him—who was believed to have discovered the Philosophers' Stone. It was said, too, that he experimented with potable gold. The beverage may not have rendered him immortal, or judging by a later portrait, conspicuously youthful but he did live into his seventies and that in an age when average life expectancy was thirty-five.

His most famous work, dated 1471, is *The Compound of Alchymy or The Twelve Gates leading to the Discovery of the Philosophers' Stone* (Liber Duodecim Portarum). Much interest has been shown in an illustration he provided known as The Wheel, its planetary symbolism held to represent chemical formulae allied to the Great Work.

Rosenkreuz, Christian (1378–?1484). Rosenkreuz and the term 'Rosicrucian' are first mentioned in two manifestos that appeared between 1605 and 1620. These were the *Fama Fraternitatis RC* and *Confessio Fraternitatis*, supposedly describing the aims and ambitions of a secret brotherhood committed to the 'universal reformation of mankind'. They describe how its founder, Christian Rosenkreuz travelled to Damascus and beyond in search of hidden knowledge before returning home to Germany. Having imparted what he had learned to eight friends, physicians like himself, he enjoined them to travel throughout Europe and establish in each country a fraternity of like-minded peers. Three generations or 120 years later one of these chanced upon a vault containing the perfectly preserved body of Christian Rosenkreuz, as well as important documents which he duly copied and translated. The tomb was resealed and its whereabouts remain unknown. Authorship of a third text, *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz*, was attributed to a German churchman named Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654) but this is now disputed..

Most scholars accept that Rosenkreuz is a mythical character but Rudolf Steiner (q.v.) maintained he not only existed but resurfaced as the Comte de Saint-Germain (q.v.), a claim repeated by Max Heindel (1865-1919), author of a rather silly book called *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* (1909) and founder of The Rosicrucian Fellowship, briefly a rival to both A.M.O.R.C (*see* Lewis Spence, *above*) and another group, the *Fraternitas Rosae Crucis*, led by Reuben Swinburne Clymer. By today there are fifty

or more Rosicrucian groups in existence, one of the most popular the the Lectorium Rosicrucianum, founded in 1935 by Jan van Rijckenborgh (1896-1968).

Rosicrucianism was also part and parcel of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Indeed two of its founding fathers, W. R. Woodman and William Wynn Westcott were members of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, an Order in Masonry whose membership is limited to Christian Master Masons. (Also within Masonry is a separate Rose Croix Order, one of the thirty-three that comprise the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.)

The 'inner' Order of the Golden Dawn, created in 1892, was called the *Rosae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis* (Red Rose and Cross of Gold), its rituals centered on the tomb of Christian Rosenkreuz and referred to as the Vault of Adepts.,

Saint-Germain, Comte de (c. 1710–c. 1780). Of Portuguese, possibly Jewish origin, the mysterious Count turned up at the French Court in 1748, impressing everyone with his erudition and fluency in several European languages. Indeed his versatility seemed boundless: a competent chemist (inventor of a technique that cured flaws in diamonds), a prolific composer and skilled violinist, a diplomat and spy, all of them accomplishments he claimed to have perfected over a lifetime spanning more than five-hundred years. A composer and skilled violinist, he travelled widely throughout Europe, hinting that he had in his possession an elixir that held senescence at bay and enabled him to remain a perennial thirty-year-old. He was the supposed author—it is also attributed to Cagliostro (q.v.)—of a manual called *La Très Sainte Trinosophie* and according to some, the founder of Freemasonry in France.

In 1745 he journeyed to England—Horace Walpole mentions him in one of his letters—and was there again, possibly for as long as two years, in the seventeen-sixties. A few years later he secured the patronage of the Landgrave Charles of Hesse-Kassel, a man besotted with the supernatural, and went to live on his estate in Schleswig-Holstein where he conducted alchemical experiments in a laboratory equipped by his host. He died there on 27 February 1780. Or so the official record maintains. Rumour has it that he was spotted in Paris on the eve of the Revolution nine years later, while Madame Blavatsky is but one of several people who claim to have met him. He is said also have turned up, as spry and as witty as ever, at a diplomatic reception on the eve of World War 2.

These and similar stories have turned Saint-Germain into something of a hero among occultists, his memory revered by Theosophists and others. Many claim that during his lifetime he was Sir Francis Bacon (q.v.) and, having faked his own death in 1626, emerged with a new identity, this time the son of Prince Francis II Rákóczi (who died in France in 1756.) Often referred to, therefore, as the 'Master Rakóczi', he has been revered not only by Theosophists and modern Rosicrucians but also by the White Eagle Lodge (see Grace Cooke, *above*) and not surprisingly, the Saint Germain Foundation, based in Illinois. This came into being after a mining engineer named Guy Ballard met the Count while hiking on Mount Shasta (where else?) one afternoon in 1930. Upon his death nine years later Ballard similarly reverted to his perennial identity, the Master Godfre, having been in past incarnations Richard the Lionheart and George Washington. Mrs. Ballard, not to be outdone, had been Joan of Arc, Queen Elizabeth I and Benjamin Franklin.

Before accepting all of this the reader should examine the chapter devoted to Saint-Germain in E. M. Butler's *Myth of the Magus*.

Sanders, Alex. (1926–1988) A native of Birkenhead, just across the Mersey from Gerald Gardner's birthplace, the young Sanders later moved with his family to Manchester. His claim to have been initiated at the age of seven by his maternal grandmother in North Wales was probably a fiction, a not uncommon device to suggest that contemporary witchcraft has a long pedigree behind it and is not a twentieth-century invention.

His enemies made much of the fact that a request for initiation he submitted in 1960 to Arnold and Patricia Crowther, two associates of Gerald Gardner, was turned down. (Mr. Crowther, a professional conjuror, had organised Gardner's first meeting with Aleister Crowley on May Day 1947.) The Crowthers would persistently, even obsessively, challenge the validity of Sanders' subsequent initiation at the hands of someone else but others, a few close to Gardner himself, would affirm that all was done by the book. Among them was Doreen Valiente (q.v.).

Today there exists an Alexandrian, as well as a Gardnerian, branch of witchcraft, testimony to the knack Sanders had for attracting publicity and with it, as Gardner found out, a stream of new converts. It was testimony also to his knack of putting together something that met their spiritual needs. True, many flocked to him in search of excitement, even titillation, but the survival fifty years on of the practices he introduced is proof of

their enduring appeal: he was more than just a younger, more media-savvy version of Gardner.

Much of the credit is due to Maxine Sanders, his wife since 1968. (They had participated in a ceremony to mark their formal commitment to each other—‘handfasted’ is the neopagan term—three years earlier.) Moving to London the pair came into their own. With a sense of theatre, mischievous bravado and a photogenic wife, Sanders began to attract notice, though he did not let it compromise the more serious business of initiating candidates and guiding their subsequent progress. His biography, ineptly called *King of the Witches* attracted much attention, as did a subsequent film, *Legend of the Witches*.

In 1971 Alex Sanders moved to Sussex and his marriage ended shortly afterwards. Increasingly respected in her own right, Maxine carried on the work in London, while his own behaviour grew increasingly erratic. Eight years later following another short-lived marriage, his third, he became involved with a man, Derek Taylor, every bit as unstable as himself. Announcing he was Grand Prior for England and Wales of something called the Ordine Della Luna, Sanders now claimed to be the mouthpiece of discarnate entities, among them extra-terrestrials, and was constantly urged to transmit their apocalyptic messages by the insatiable Mr. Taylor, his persistence reminiscent of Dr. Dee's harassment of Edward Kelley. The toll on Sanders' physical and mental stamina was heavy. Already suffering from lung cancer, he would die on the night of 30 April 1988, the Feast of Beltane. Days earlier he had asked Maxine to remarry him. Not necessary, she told him, they had never ceased to be married.

Schröpfer, Johann Georg (1730–74). A Freemason and owner of a coffee shop in Leipzig where he entertained customers with fake seances, aided by a magic lantern, lots of drapery, several accomplices and like his modern counterparts, the helpful cover of darkness. Known as the Illuminatus of Leipzig, he is reported to have conducted a séance for Prince Charles of Saxony but seems to have become the victim of his own success. According to one account he dispatched a fiend to torment an adversary but the demon arrived to find his intended victim dead. Furious at being thwarted, it returned to harass Schröpfer who in desperation shot himself in a wood close to Leipzig. A rival (and more credible) account has it that during one of his coffee shop performances Schröpfer sought to

demonstrate he was indestructible by shooting himself in the head. He was wrong.

Scot, Michael (c. 1175–1232). Philosopher, mathematician and ordained priest, a favourite of Pope Honorius III, Scot travelled widely in Europe after completing his studies at Oxford and Paris. One of the many scholars at the Court of Frederick II in Sicily, he collaborated on a new translation of Aristotle and wrote many scholarly papers. Those that established his popular reputation, however, dealt with astrology, alchemy and magic (*Super auctorem sphaerae*, *De Sole et Luna*, *De Chiromantia*, etc). Such was his fame by the time he died that he secured a place in Dante's *Inferno* (Canto XX, 115-17). He has appeared in several works of fiction, among them Sir Walter Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* where the opening of the magician's tomb is described.

Many legends grew up around Scot, one about how he met his death. According to this, Scot predicted he would be killed by a stone weighing not more than two ounces. In order to protect himself, he always went about with a helmet on his head. But Fate was not to be cheated. One morning in church just as he raised his helmet at the elevation of the Host, down from the rafters fell the fatal stone.

Scot, Reginald. He was the author of a work popularly known as the *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), an exposure of ceremonial magic and the 'cozeners' who practised it. In it he describes magical practices collected, he boasts, from 212 Latin authors and a further twenty-three who wrote in English. Observation, combined with common sense, he argued, were enough to show that what might seem miraculous was mere trickery. His ambition was to persuade his readers that the persecution of people suspected of witchcraft was cruel and unjust. Yet many of his contemporaries, far from being put off by what they read, were fascinated. The book was frequently reprinted and emerged in 1665 with copious additions by an anonymous author who, unlike Scot, took its contents seriously.

Sibly, Ebenezer (1757–1800) known as the Prophet Sibly, he was a physician and astrologer whose *New and Complete Illustration of the Celestial Science of Astrology* was published in 1784. The book, in four parts, included the natal horoscope of several historical figures but the fourth volume ventured further afield, offering an account of magical workings, similar to or possibly derived from, those found in the

Discoverie of Witchcraft by Reginald Scot (q.v.). Sibly held that all Nature holds prophetic significance, one he sought to make known to his contemporaries. He is remembered also for the horoscope he drew up for the newly independent United States of America after its constitution was adopted in 1787.

Pope Silvester II, (946–1003). Better known by his birth name, Gerbert (d'Aurillac), he was said to have dabbled in nigromancy, as well as being the inventor of a bronze head that answered questions put to it. (The response was a monosyllabic 'Yes' or 'No', so enquiries needed to be framed with that limitation in mind.) He also had a familiar spirit named Meridiana. While among the successors of St. Peter we should perhaps remember also Pope Alexander VI (1431–1503), first of the Borgia popes, if only because Aleister Crowley identified him as one of his previous incarnations.

Simon Magus. Said by Irenaeus to be one of the founders of Gnosticism, he was happily working wonders in Samaria when, according to the New Testament (Acts viii, 9-13), he converted to Christianity on witnessing the superior skills of Philip the Evangelist. To show his renunciation of magic Simon hurled his occult books into the sea, a foolhardy gesture he lived to regret, for his conversion did not last long. Non-biblical accounts of his subsequent career, those for example of Irenaeus and Hippolytus, tell how he launched a Gnostic-type religion of his own. Justin Martyr (2nd Century) describes how he worked miracles in Rome during the reign of the Emperor Claudius. He later got into a dispute with a grumpy St. Peter and offered to prove he had the gift of flight. Having climbed to the top of a tall wooden structure built for the occasion, he threw himself off, only to come crashing down to earth and be killed. The emperor ordered his body to be preserved for three days, confident he would rise again.

Solomon. According to the Book of Kings, he was the son of David and his successor as ruler of Israel from circa 970 to 931 BC. Famous for his wisdom, he built the first temple in Jerusalem, having reputedly coerced the angels into helping him. Alas, over time his bevy of wives and concubines, no fewer than 700 and 300 of each, led him from the straight and narrow, even from worship of the one true God. In the centuries that followed Solomon became the subject of many legends, with the Roman historian Josephus reporting that he had power over the denizens of

Heaven and Hell. Such was his notoriety that his name began to appear in folklore not only in Europe but also in India, Ethiopia and even China. By the Middle Ages he had become an expert in magic, alchemy, astrology and much else besides, able, according to Kabbalists, to journey to the very gates of Heaven on a throne of light resting on the back of an eagle. Many magical textbooks were ascribed to him, the most famous being the *Testament of Solomon* which describes how a magical ring given to him by the Archangel Michael enabled him to conscript an army of demons to assist in the building of the temple. Likewise attributed to him was the *Key of Solomon* (*Clavicula Salomonis Regis*), written in the 14th Century and its sequel, two centuries later, the *Lesser Key* or *Lemegeton*, both a happy hunting-ground for Renaissance magicians.

Solomon and more specifically, his Temple, lie at the heart of Freemasonry, notably the apocryphal tale of Hiram Abiff, its chief architect, and his subsequent murder at the hands of three fellow masons.

Spearman-Cook, Gladys. This lady presided over an organization known as the School of Universal Philosophy and Healing. Students of the School, situated in the London's Holland Park area, received instruction from, among others, the Lord Hierarch of Scorpio. This was done, according to his own account (delivered through the lips of the entranced Mrs. Spearman-Cook) 'through the velocity of her mind in an entranced state but put forward into time', which enabled her, to 'ascend up (*sic*) into and onto the Plane of the Sun.' More down-to-earth was a Venusian dignitary who predicted a victory for the Labour Party in the General Election of 1970. The Conservatives won comfortably.

Two years later an issue of the organisation's house magazine, *The Occult Gazette* bore the date August 1st 72 A.M, the AM an abbreviation of 'After Merope'. Readers were told that the Planetary Hierarchy wished to introduce a new calendar based on Mrs Spearman-Cook's birth in 1900, while Merope had been her name in an incarnation 13,000 years earlier.

The *Occult Gazette* mentioned here should not be confused with its more distinguished homonym, extinct since the nineteen-forties, which attracted the best writers of its day.

Steiner, Rudolf (1861–1925). Son of a station master in Pottschach, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, his lifelong interest in 'Higher Worlds', his own term, began at an early age when he 'saw' the ghost of an aunt who had recently died. His knowledge deepened thanks to a herb

gatherer he used to meet on the train to Vienna while a student at the city's technical college. Before taking his degree, he secured a job with the Goethe Archive in Weimar, an involvement that deepened his interest in epistemology. His belief, like that of Goethe, was that thoughts impinge on the mind just as objects impinge on the senses. (His subsequent book, *The Problem of Knowledge* explores the topic further.) After moving to Berlin he became involved with Franz Hartmann, sometime disciple of Madame Blavatsky, and Theodore Reuss (q.v.) who initiated him and his future wife, his second, into an irregular Masonic Lodge (Memphis-Mizraïm). He seems to have abandoned Reuss just days before the founding of the O.T.O.

By then he had become involved in Theosophy and in 1909 was appointed head of the society's German section by Annie Besant, Madame Blavatsky's successor. Two years later, alarmed by his views on Jesus and the 'Cosmic Christ' (who was definitely not Krishnamurti, the Messiah she herself had in mind), she approved his resignation. He then went off to found the Anthroposophical Society, taking with him most of the German Theosophists.

The new movement eventually settled on a hilltop at Dornach in Switzerland, though its original headquarters, an impressive double-domed edifice made entirely of wood, burned down and Steiner did not live long enough to see the completion of its robustly concrete successor.

Sensitive and intelligent, he was something of a polymath. His contribution, at times eccentric, to education, medicine, agriculture (the 'biodynamic' method), architecture and art has been significant. Despite what his supporters claim, little of his thinking, as opposed to its practical application, is original. This was best summed up by the theologian Alois Mager in his *Theosophie und Christentum*:

'All the knowledge which in his meanderings through the various departments of learning, he tasted and snatched at, he managed with uncanny skill and delicate insight to weave together like threads in a cloth...He went to school with the Cabbala, with occultism and spiritualism. He read the books of the Old and New Testaments, and...he studied Goethe. For most of the time, however, his little hut rested on Indian soil where he used the materials prepared by Theosophy for his own elaborate constructions. In the entire edifice of Anthroposophy there is not a stone that has not been broken loose from some other building.'

The psychiatrist Anthony Storr devotes a perceptive but not unsympathetic chapter to Steiner in his *Feet of Clay: a study of gurus*, (HarperCollins, London, 1997).

Tritheim, Johann (1462–1516). Abbott of Spanheim and occultist who counted among his students Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (q.v.). Profoundly interested in alchemy and hermetic science, he attempts in his book *Liber octo quaestionum* to analyse the respective natures of angelic and human beings, as well as the relationship between them. Perhaps his best-known work was *Steganographia*, long believed to be a treatise on spirit communication (and so placed on the Index by the Church) but now thought to be a manual on writing and reading encrypted texts. Dr. Dee (q.v.) valued it highly.

Valiente, Doreen (1922–1999). Her contribution to the ritual elements of Gardnerian witchcraft (*see* Gardner, *above*) entitles her to special mention. Hers was the knack of creating a coherent whole out of a welter of diverse ingredients, her preference being for a more spontaneous, naturalistic approach than that favoured by Gardner. In her later years she eschewed group work and opted to keep herself to herself, living modestly and writing several books. A belated advocate of self-initiation, she offered advice on how to go about it, enabling many witches with a preference for working alone to do so in an informed manner and with confidence. Her commitment to neopaganism remained unwavering. She died in 1999, almost half a century after her initiation.

Waite, Arthur Edward (1857–1942) Born in the United States, he and his sister were brought to England by their mother, herself English, following their father's early death. In 1891 Waite joined the Outer Order of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, only to resign some eighteen months later. Within a few years he was back again, this time—unlike the hapless Crowley—proceeding from the Outer to the Inner Order. By 1903 the brouhaha (*see* Crowley, *above*) that split the membership erupted, with Waite and others staying with the Isis-Urania faction, soon imbuing it with mystico-Christian elements then fashionable. (Rudolf Steiner and Dion Fortune likewise favoured them.) The same tendencies had already led Waite into the Masonic *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* (*see* Christian Rosenkreuz, *above*) and in 1915 he founded his own Fellowship of the Rosy Cross. The novelist Charles Williams became a member, unlike his fellow-Inkling, Owen Barfield, who opted for Rudolf Steiner's

Anthroposophy. (Two other Inklings, J. R. R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis were more orthodox, the one Catholic and the other Anglican.)

Waite is famous for his translation of Eliphas Lévi's works and for two of the several books he wrote himself (*Book of Black Magic and Pacts* and *Ceremonial Magic*) as well as for what is still known as the Rider-Waite tarot deck. Rider was the publisher, the actual designer of the cards, unfairly overlooked, was Pamela Colman Smith, like Waite a sometime member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. (Waite's autobiographical *Shadows of Life and Thought*, described by the author as 'studies in faded memory' has a section on that organization.)

Never one to shed grudges, Aleister Crowley mischievously depicted Waite as the character Arthwaite in his novel *Moonchild*. In the same book neither MacGregor Mathers nor a thinly disguised Annie Besant fare any better.

Wierus, Johannes (Johann Weyer) (1516–88). A pupil of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (q.v.) and author of a manual, *De praestigiis daemonum et incantationibus et venificiis* ('On the Illusions of the Demons and on Spells and Poisons') in which, as the title indicated, he takes a sceptical approach. (He was among the first to oppose the persecution of witches.) That said, his second book, *Pseudomonarchia daemonum*, intended to supplement the first, contains a list of sixty-nine demons, together with advice on how to secure their collaboration.

Yeats, W. B. (1865–1939). As a young man the Irish poet helped establish a small esoteric group in Dublin called the Hermetic Students, later to become the Dublin Hermetic Order. Once in London he rapidly became a favourite of Madame Blavatsky but in 1890, one year before her death, switched his allegiance to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. There, given the magical name 'Daemon est Deus Inversus', he rose through the ranks, recruiting both Maude Gonne and the actress Florence Farr, a bossy boots with whom he later quarrelled. When the Order fell apart Yeats joined the faction eventually known as Stella Matutina, resigning only in the nineteen-twenties. A general account of this period can be found in Yeats' autobiography *The Trembling of the Veil*. The author of *Studies of Mysticism and Certain Aspects of the Secret Tradition* and *The Real History of the Rosicrucians*, he once wrote—'The mystical life is the centre of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write.'

Ziito. A fourteenth-century magician at the Court of King Wenceslas IV of Bohemia, his feats are recounted by the historian Dubravius. William Godwin, in his *Lives of the Necromancers*, describes how on one occasion, having witnessed the amateurish tricks of a visiting conjuror, Ziito swallowed him whole in full view of the spectators. We are told that he ‘then retired for a short while to a closet and presently returned, leading the magician along with him.’ Neither seemed the worse for the experience

¹ As he himself put it: ‘But of magic I wrote whilst I was very young three large books, which I called *Of Occult Philosophy*, in which what was then through the curiosity of my youth, erroneous.’ Today (2014) the author of this Appendix (first published in 1972) can sympathise, having likewise sought in this new edition to correct details that were ‘through the curiosity of my youth, erroneous.’



MAGIC: AN OCCULT PRIMER cover and book has been designed and typeset by Greg Esposito of Providence, Rhode Island. The body text was set in Bergamo 11.5/16, with side bars in Calibri and subtitles in Bergamo and Bergamo Small Caps.

YOUR NOTES

MAGIC: AN OCCULT PRIMER

David Conway

Nowadays there are countless books on Magic. This one is different. As different as when it first appeared in 1972. What makes it different is that it tells the reader—expert or beginner, sceptic or believer—what Magic is, why Magic works and, most importantly, how Magic can be worked. Few books do all three, certainly not with so much style, scholarship and humour. This new edition, enlarged and updated by the author, is certain to delight old friends and win over countless new ones. I highly recommend it.

Maxine Sanders

An absorbing textbook on the history, art and practice of magic...so tempered by healthy cynicism is this presentation...that even the most sceptical will suspend his or her disbelief.

Vogue

After a distinguished academic career, which mixed study in London and the Sorbonne in Paris (where he ran off with a travelling circus)...he decided to turn his knowledge of magic into a no-nonsense guide that could be enjoyed by experts and the wider public alike...it remains a considerable success with both adept and novice magicians.

Philip Carr-Gomm and Richard Heygate

The Book of English Magic

